



CRAIG & MENDES TALK **SPECTRE** 

267

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NUMBER 1
SCI-FI MAG
★★★★

TO VICTORY!

THE HUNGER GAMES MOCKINGJAY PART 2

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AND MORE ON THE EPIC FINALE

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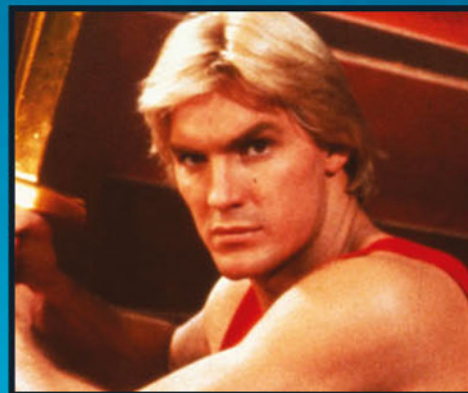
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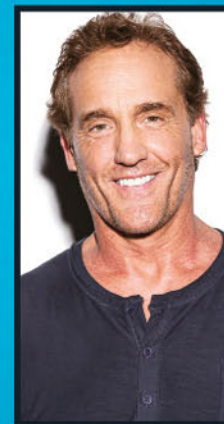
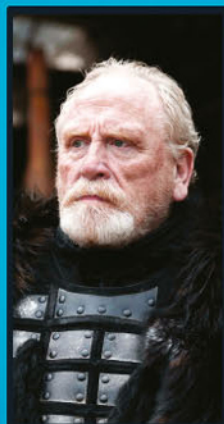
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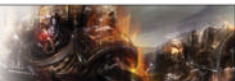
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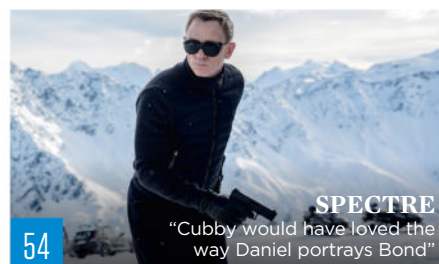
All guests appear subject to work commitments at the event. Guests will be charging for autographs. Lineup is subject to change but is correct at time of going to print. Entry to each event can be purchased individually on the door(s). All tickets are limited. We reserve the right to refuse entry. Tickets may be limited on the day. All preorders are final.



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THE HUNGER GAMES

"This is Katniss's revenge movie"



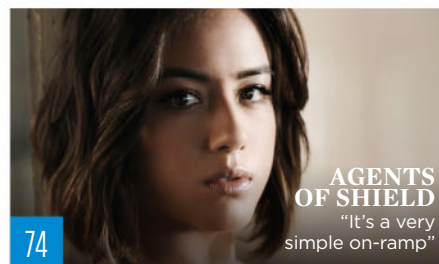
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"Cubby would have loved the way Daniel portrays Bond"



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What better time to look at *Back To The Future II*'s future?

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Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Christopher Nolan remaking *Akira*? That's such an intriguing proposition, I hope the rumours are true.

RANTS

→ Remote control AT-ATs, Millennium Falcon drones, "talking" Chewbacca masks... If *Star Wars* toys like those had been available when I was a kid, my head would have exploded.



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

→ Nick Frost's anecdote about *The Day Of The Triffids* [p68] is the first time anyone's answer has ever reduced me to hot tears of laughter. Enjoy.
→ Picked up a great new book: *The League Of Regrettable Superheroes*. A hugely entertaining celebration of the thin line between genius and daftness.



IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

RAVES

→ Loving the pop art-style John Steed and Mrs Peel prints at www.artandhue.com.
→ The Talking Pictures TV channel (now on Freeview channel 81) is worth a look for cult items like *Gorgo* and *The Trollenberg Terror*.



JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

RAVES

→ Chuffed to see *Preacher* get a full season order. Couldn't be more excited for Joe Gilgun's Cassidy.
→ Fultoning sheep in *Metal Gear Solid V* is my new fave thing.
→ Baffled that *Prometheus 2* is actually, really happening. Is anyone crying out for that sequel?



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RANTS

→ Seen the first two eps of *Doctor Who*: some good stuff, some not so good. Tad worried that the darkness and slowness is putting young and general viewers off.
→ Yay to "The Underwater Menace" coming to DVD! Boo to it not having animated episodes!
→ Hooked on the Talking Pictures TV channel!



JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ Been watching a load of *Star Wars* Making Of's of late. One of my favourites is *From Star Wars To Jedi: The Making Of A Saga* (<http://bit.ly/startojedi>). It features tons of rare footage including a rehearsal of Sy Snootles' Jabba palace song, before it was translated to Huttese for Jedi's original release.



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK DEPUTY ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ Far more excited than I should be after seeing the *X-Files* trailer. It's like they've never been away. Glad CSM is back and that the truth is still out there.
→ The Log Lady. A real shame Catherine E Coulson won't be part of the new *Twin Peaks*.



ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

RAVES

→ Recently attended Secret Cinema for *The Empire Strikes Back* in London and was blown away by the whole experience. It was like walking onto the *Star Wars* set and being part of the film. I take my hat off to the cast and crew from Secret Cinema. If you didn't make it, then keep your eyes peeled for the next event.



JANE CROWTHER EDITOR, TOTAL FILM

RAVES

→ Being on set of a Bond film is always brilliant and old school (ate lunch in the gardens from the start of *From Russia With Love* etc) but *SPECTRE* was especially cool. I have high hopes for the film.
→ Wish I hadn't read the Sony notes. Have spoilt it for myself.



PAUL GARNER ARTIST

RAVES

→ The HBO *Westworld* reboot trailer looks fab.
→ Let's have a spin-off theme park ride too!
→ Ridley – please no more *Prometheuses*! Your last effort's stinky script and dumb characters made me think it's time this franchise was blown out of the airlock!



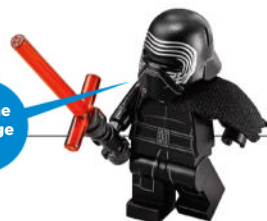
They say all good things must come to an end, but the denouements of major sci-fi sagas always bring out mixed emotions. Yes, we want to know how everything wraps up, but there's also a sense of sadness that we won't be getting any more.

Then there's the pressure on the creators to get it right. Nail the conclusion and your place in the pantheon of greats is all-but-assured. Get your last act wrong, however, and you could end up devaluing all the good stuff that came before.

The Hunger Games arrives at its final instalment, *Mockingjay Part 2*, with the chance to go out with a bang, as Katniss leads her final assault on President Snow's Capitol. We sent our Nick to LA to grill director Francis Lawrence and the stars about their plans for the resistance (p48).

We also take an in-depth look at the return of James Bond, a movie saga that rarely has to worry about conclusions. *SPECTRE* (p54) means a comeback for that famous evil organisation, so we interrogate key personnel to get the intel. And with the biggest franchise of them all – you know, the one with the battles in space – back in just a couple of months, we speak to one of the brains behind the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy, the Millennium Falcon (p70). There'll be loads more on *Star Wars* next issue – subscribe by 25 October (see p32) to make sure you get your hands on our *The Force Awakens* celebration.

See me on page 119



Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor
@RichDEdwards

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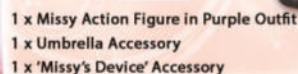
PORTRAIT BY OLLY CURTIS

DOCTOR WHO

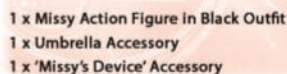
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Red Alert

DECEMBER
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→ NEWS //// INTERVIEWS //// INSIGHT //// SANTA! → edited by Jordan Farley

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE!

JURASSIC LARK

Pixar journeys to a land before
time for prehistoric adventure

The Good Dinosaur



Disney's prized animation studio

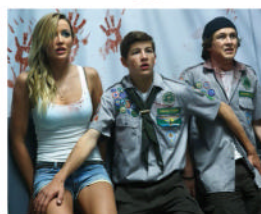
Pixar has already had a cracking year, with the wonderful *Inside Out* finding the California-based pixel-wrangers back on the world-best form that led to the likes of *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo* and *WALL-E*. Now 2015 will see Pixar release two films in a single year for the first time in the studio's history, the second of which – *The Good Dinosaur* – is due in November and asks a whopper of a “what if?” – what if the meteor that wiped out the dinosaurs missed Earth entirely? →

Highlights



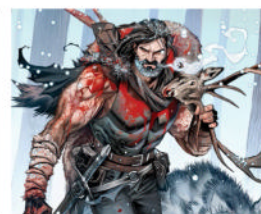
12 DEMON DAYS

→ We quiz Tom Riley as the final season of *Da Vinci's Demons* approaches.



14 SCOUT'S HONOUR

→ Boy Scouts battle the undead in *Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse*.



21 CLAUS ENCOUNTER

→ Grant Morrison's Santa Claus comic *Klaus* ushers in the festive season.

SCI-FACT! Peter Sohn previously helmed Pixar short “Partly Cloudy”, which screened before *Up*.

“It really is about Arlo finding himself and becoming stronger and more brave”

“When we first started talking about that idea, we realised you can go anywhere with it, and we did,” director Peter Sohn tells Red Alert over the phone from Pixar’s Emeryville HQ. The key evolutionary change at the heart of Pixar’s brave new world: dinosaurs can talk, while humans have been relegated to the dogs of the dinosaur kingdom. “With herbivores we said: okay, if they have become like humans, they may be the agrarian society. They’ll be the farmers. And then carnivores, maybe they’re the ranchers and they collect the meat. So it was more of a societal evolution, but still retaining some of that primitive nature you love about dinosaurs.”

THE DINO’S JOURNEY

Arlo is the Good Dinosaur of the title – an 11-year-old Apatosaurus voiced by Raymond Ochoa. Whereas his two siblings are bristling with youthful exuberance, Arlo is best described as the runt of the litter. “Not that Arlo isn’t full of life,” says Sohn. “But he didn’t get all the cards when he came out.” The young dino’s problems mean he can’t pull his weight on the family farm, until one day tragedy strikes and Arlo finds himself swept hundreds of miles down river. “The journey really is about Arlo finding himself and becoming stronger and more brave and how he gets through his issues.”

Accompanying Arlo on his arduous journey back to the Clawed-Tooth Mountains is Spot – a human boy. But as the name implies, Spot has more in common with canines than Homo sapiens. “What’s fun about the boy and dog story is it’s really a one-way street at the beginning,” Sohn says. “We’re playing Spot very animalistic. He doesn’t speak any language and is very much a pest on the farm, eating their wares and becoming a problem, and Arlo starts to blame him for some of the issues that he’s been going through. But there isn’t any conflicting feeling coming back from Spot. Arlo soon discovers Spot is more than just this animal, and begins to understand and emotionally change because of his relationship with Spot.”

On his journey home Arlo encounters a soothsaying triceratops, vulture-like pterodactyls and a family of friendly T-rexes, led by patriarch Sam Elliott. But the film’s third major character is nature itself, with Sohn and

Well that’s never going to keep the rain off.



his team crafting some stunning, photo-real environments. “The film takes its time to slow down in moments where we’re really enjoying the beauty and some of the character of nature. It was a big deal because it’s a journey film, but it’s also a survival film,” Sohn says. “We did a lot of research. We went up to the North-West and to Wyoming and Oregon and really discovered how obviously soul-enriching and beautiful the landscape was, but also dangerous at the same time. It keeps Arlo a stranger in a strange land, until later in the film when he starts to feel more comfortable in it and more a part of it.”

Much has been made of Pixar’s decision to drop *The Good Dinosaur*’s first director, Bob Peterson, during production and change all but one of the film’s voice cast less than six months before release. But as Sohn explains all that behind the scenes turmoil was in service of making the best film possible. “I wanted to really focus on a simpler version of the story about Arlo’s relationship with Spot and how he grows. We stripped out a little cultural element in the previous version, and tried to install something new, like making Arlo younger, which did affect all the other characters. So changes like that had a domino effect.”

“I’ve gone through changes on a project but never as a director or a co-director,” Sohn continues. “The focus was always on trying to make the best thing possible. It was clearly understood by everyone that that was the priority. These changes do happen because creatively films can get stuck or really complicated. Specifically for *The Good Dinosaur*, it got complicated and stuck. But at the same time Bob – who I love – is still here working on other projects. We’re all on the same boat, trying to make the best film possible.”

The Good Dinosaur opens on 27 November.



It’s not easy being green.





REX APPEAL

Digging behind the scenes of *The Good Dinosaur*

THE MANE EVENT

→ There are Raptors in *The Good Dinosaur*, but Sohn made the toothsome people-eaters kid-friendly by turning to science. "Around the time we started developing this, there was a lot of evidence that Velociraptors had these anchor points in their skin for what looked like feathers," Sohn says. "Once we saw that, some of the guys were coming up with some really funny ideas for hairdos and how to make them into a character that also split because of the evolutionary change that we're doing. They look really fun."

BOY STORY

→ Arlo underwent some major changes when Sohn jumped on board *The Good Dinosaur*. "When we first started the project, he was a much older character that was pretty much a four-legged creature you would think belongs in the wilderness. I really pushed for that coming-of-age concept, and the story gang started making Arlo younger. Once we started focusing on the idea that the dinosaur would be the boy we pushed the design to have boy-like features. He's kind of gangly, and the way he gestures with his eyes pushes that idea."

Smile for the camera.



NATURAL SELECTION

→ Of all the dinosaurs, why make Arlo an Apatosaurus? The answer goes back to Sohn's childhood. "It was one of the first dinosaurs that I loved when I was a kid. I grew up in New York and used to go to the Natural History Museum all the time. In the first room there was a huge Barosaurus. The magic of something like that was so real, it just sparks the imagination. With Arlo we started off trying to find a classic dinosaur feel, but at the same time develop him into the character we would need for the film."

SILENT MOVIE

→ Sohn has been at Pixar since *Finding Nemo*, and working on *WALL-E* helped with the creation of Spot – a speechless character. "I worked on *WALL-E* and that first act where Andrew Stanton didn't want any dialogue. He knew I came from an animation background, so in my boards I would try to sell the gestures without dialogue. There was a part of that skill set that was necessary in fleshing this film out. It's not a silent movie at all, but we have found ways to keep the relationship between Arlo and Spot non-verbal."

So, the dino's the boy, the boy's the dog, and the cattle are just cattle. Probably.



Sam Elliott leads a family of friendly T-rexes.



Red Alert Dec 2015

SCI-FACT! The season three script team includes writers for *Lost*, *Hannibal* and *Breaking Bad*.

"We are the knights
who say Ni!"

ON SET EXCLUSIVE

LAST CRUSADE

Da Vinci's Demons set for an epic final season



"No more Renaissance MacGyver," says *Da Vinci's Demons* star Tom Riley. "This year is richer, deeper and massive."

As *Da Vinci's Demons* enters its final season Riley assures us the show is going out on a high. With a new showrunner on board – John Shiban, a producer with *The X-Files* and *Breaking Bad* on his CV – the new season is, says Riley, "the best stuff we've done. It's so much richer and so much more characterful. It's certainly smarter than it was."

A fanciful retelling of the early life of Leonard Da Vinci set against the political machinations of Renaissance Italy, the show spent two seasons under the guidance of David S Goyer (*The Dark Knight*, *Man Of Steel*) and had an unashamed comic book tone. But, says Riley, "John Shiban came on board and just loved the potential of the show which he didn't feel was being explored. That's a completely fair way of judging the first two seasons. We were going for a bombastic, exciting adventure, and it was very entertaining. John was adamant that we could delve deeper into the characters.

It's still an exciting adventure show, but it's very much the characters driving the plot rather than the other way around."

Any worries this might mean less action are dispelled when we meet the design team on set. "No. We're having more fun," one of them enthuses. "It starts off with such a huge opener that for us has been another step up. We've built streets then had tanks rolling along them blowing them up."

The tank, which looks like a large Renaissance Dalek, is one of *Da Vinci's* own



"What do you mean,
did I put out the fire?
I thought you were!"

designs, brought to life by Ottoman invaders. Leonardo having his own inventions turned against him will be a theme of the season, says Riley. Another theme of the season is the "pleasure palace" – a new set that the cast and crew are all gushing about. It's exactly what it sounds like – a den of iniquity with some extraordinary detailing. "Did you notice the staircase looks like a vagina?" asks our guide. Riley is later unsurprised to learn the designers were eager to give us a tour of the place. "If you can spend enough time working out how to turn erections into door handles you're gonna want to show it off."

Riley tells us that knowing the show was ending has actually had a positive effect on the season. He promises resolution for all the characters and storylines and definitely "No cliffhanger!" And there was no skimping: "When we knew it was ending we were throwing money at the final episode to make it the best it could possibly be."



The design team have had fun with Da Vinci's inventions in the final series.



Catwalk trends this season include knee-high boots and all-over brocade.

“It’s the best stuff we’ve done. It’s certainly smarter than it was”

I thought that was very big of Starz to be honest. It will pay back the audience's investment.”

He also reveals that the main cast were all allowed to take home a prop as a souvenir. “Everybody picked something that meant something to them. If I tell you what I chose it would be a spoiler because it appears in the final episode. It think it will be obvious, though, when you see it.”

But did anybody decide they wanted a door handle in the shape of an erection? ●

The third and final season of Da Vinci's Demons airs from 25 October on Fox.

© REX (1)

“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“I’VE GOT NO SHAME ABOUT MY MYSPACE PHOTOS, ESPECIALLY THE ONE OF ME IN MY UNDERPANTS WHICH IS A GLORIOUS PHOTO OF A MAN IN HIS NATURAL HABITAT.”

Don't know what Tom Hardy is talking about? We urge you to google “Tom Hardy MySpace”.



AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ Neil Gaiman's **Neverwhere** heading to TV again. *The Hunger Games'* Francis Lawrence will helm.

→ *Sleepy Hollow's* Phillip Iscove adapting **The Island Of Dr Moreau** for CBS.

→ A TV show inspired by Stephen King's **The Mist** is in the works.

→ *Scream* writer Kevin Williamson adapting HG Wells vs Jack The Ripper film/novel **Time After Time** for ABC.

→ *Scott Pilgrim's* Mary Elizabeth Winstead to star in comic thriller **BrainDead**.

→ *Hannibal's* David Slade re-teaming with Bryan Fuller for *American Gods*. He'll direct the pilot and executive produce.

→ **Preacher** ordered to series at AMC. The 10-episode first season will debut in May.

→ *Being Human's* Michael Socha to star in **Aliens** (not that one - this is a comedy drama) for Channel 4. Michael Smiley and Ashley Walters also star.



MY SCI-FI



DAVID MITCHELL

THE **CLOUD ATLAS** AUTHOR'S BOOKS BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN LITERARY FICTION AND SF

Favourite SF/fantasy films

→ 2001: *A Space Odyssey* and *Blade Runner* are both superlative, and have transcended the decades they were made in to become timeless works of art. *Gattaca* is an underrated film that has stayed sharp in my memory for 15 years. I also admire Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* and *Sunshine*, as he finds fresh perspectives on old themes.

Favourite SF/fantasy TV shows

→ *Doctor Who's* best stories are, for me, as good as anything in the genre. *Star Trek* is a televisual mug of cocoa, though now and then you find great things floating in it. This'll date me, but *Sapphire And Steel* compensated for its '70s effects with memorable scripts and a kooky chemistry between the two leads. *Twin Peaks* casts a long and influential shadow, and I've recently been hooked on *Sense8*.

Favourite SF/fantasy books

→ Ursula K Le Guin's *Left Hand Of Darkness*, *The Dispossessed* and *The Earthsea Cycle* are formative texts for me. Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* sequence made a big impact on my youthful self, and still reads superbly.

Favourite SF/fantasy comics

→ Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* is almost hubristically audacious, but who else would dare to portray Shakespeare's dream-life? Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's *Watchmen* is grungy, ill (but in a good way) and pathologically addictive. And I have a soft spot for *2000 AD*, which I ingested throughout my teens.

David Mitchell's new novel, Slade House, is published by Sceptre on 27 October.



SCI-FACT! Patrick Schwarzenegger, son of Arnold, co-stars in *Scouts Guide* as Ben's obnoxious love rival.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

The zom-com where a trio of scouts earn their badges in creative killing

IT'S AN '80S THROWBACK

1 When it comes to modern zombie comedies there are two titans: *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Zombieland*. *Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse* distinguishes itself from those noughties classics by taking inspiration from a different decade entirely. "I got really excited after I read the script because it had a very '80s vibe to it, which I really was into," director Christopher Landon tells Red Alert. "I grew up on *Gremlins* and *Goonies* and *Monster Squad*, so I thought this was an opportunity to make something like that."

A FUTURE X-MAN STARS

2 Tye Sheridan, soon to be seen as a young Cyclops in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, plays Ben, best friend to fellow Boy Scouts Carter and Augie. Luckily the zompocalypse hits during their final camping trip. "Their relationship is the anchor of the film because the concept is so outlandish it was really important to have a story

about this friendship," Landon says. "Ben and Carter have outgrown it, but Augie doesn't want to let go of scouting. For me, that was the fun of the story – getting to see how a friendship implodes then gets rebuilt over the course of one night."

THE ZOMBIES HAVE PERSONALITY

3 Forget the faceless (sometimes literally) walkers of most undead movies, the zombies in *Scouts Guide* have their own distinct charms. "Our zombies have personalities that they've brought over from the other side," Landon says. "We had a massive list of different types: yoga-mom zombies, a zombie wearing a YOLO t-shirt..."

IT'S GOT SCARES TOO

4 The film is primarily a comedy, but having worked on the *Paranormal Activity* series Landon knows the power of a

good fright. "It was fun to be ridiculous, and it was great to not have to be found-footage!" he says. "But I always tried to keep comedy in the mix because if you're laughing with them you're going to be fearful for them later on."

THEY GET CREATIVE

5 Being a Boy Scout proves surprisingly useful at the end of days. "It was fun coming up with ways to use their skills," Landon says. "For instance, when Ben gets trapped in a jail cell he whittles a mop into a spear and uses that as a weapon. It's funny because we've had zero cooperation from the Boy Scouts of America. They hate this movie, I'm sure. But I was like, 'This is the best thing that's ever happened to them. They've had so much bad press, but we make them look cool!'"

Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse opens on 6 November.

SCI-FACT! Titan Comics' *Assassin's Creed* miniseries by Anthony Del Col and Neil Edwards is out this month.

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

UNDER THE HOOD

Fassbender reunites with *Macbeth* director for *Assassin's Creed*

➔ **On the surface, stab-'em-up videogame** *Assassin's Creed* doesn't have much in common with Shakespeare. But after directing Michael Fassbender in *Macbeth*, Australian helmer Justin Kurzel is teaming up once again with the young Magneto on the upcoming blockbuster, which is shooting in Spain, Malta and London.

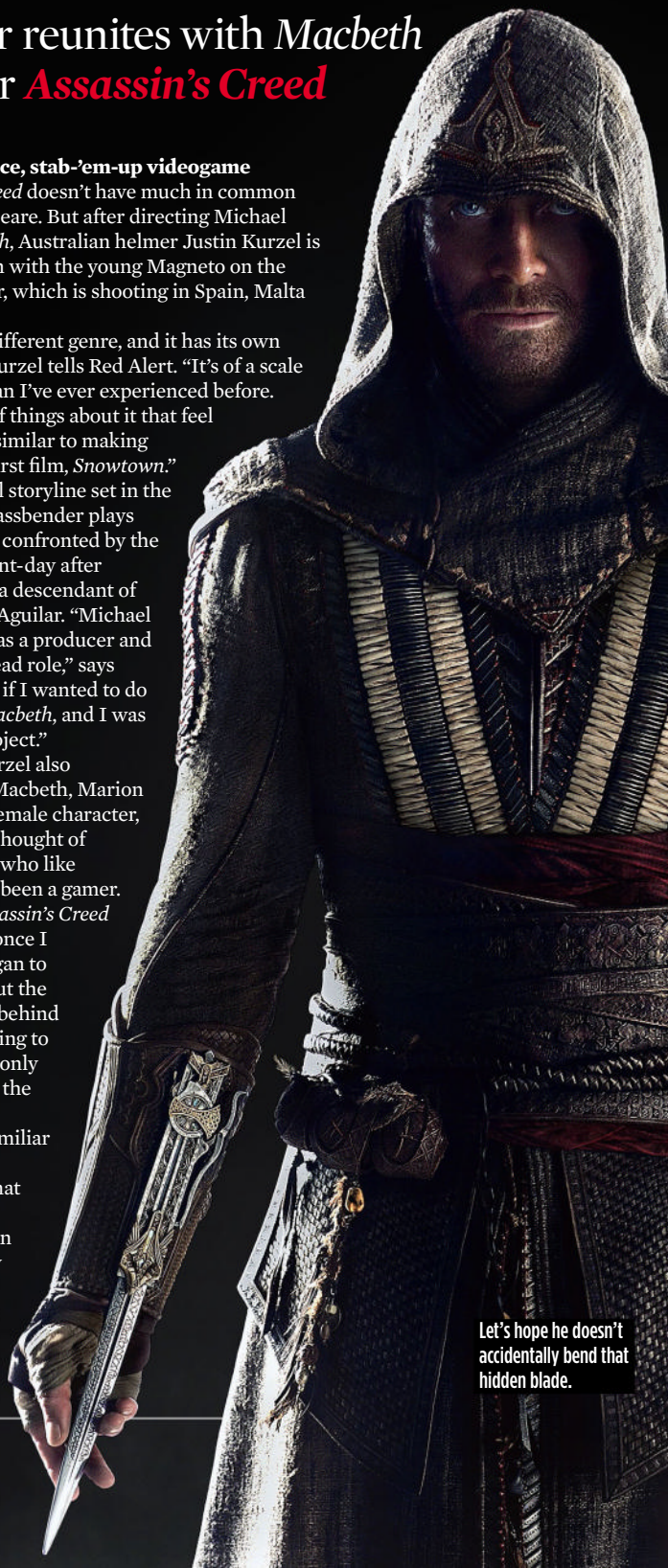
"It's a completely different genre, and it has its own kind of challenges," Kurzel tells Red Alert. "It's of a scale that's much bigger than I've ever experienced before. But there's also a lot of things about it that feel familiar and are very similar to making *Macbeth* or even my first film, *Snowtown*."

Boasting an original storyline set in the world of the games, Fassbender plays Callum Lynch, who is confronted by the Templars in the present-day after discovering that he is a descendant of 15th century assassin Aguilar. "Michael was already attached as a producer and had been cast in the lead role," says Kurzel. "He asked me if I wanted to do it after we finished *Macbeth*, and I was really taken by the project."

Fassbender and Kurzel also recruited their Lady Macbeth, Marion Cotillard. "There's a female character, and we just instantly thought of Marion," says Kurzel, who like Fassbender has never been a gamer.

"I only knew of *Assassin's Creed* from afar before, but once I became involved I began to understand more about the game and the culture behind it," he says. "We're trying to make a film that's not only going to connect with the fanbase but also with people who are not familiar with the game. Like *Macbeth*, it's a story that has really compelling characters that you can connect with in a very human way." ●

Assassin's Creed opens on 30 December 2016.



Let's hope he doesn't accidentally bend that hidden blade.

DEV SPEAK

LONDON CALLING

Ubisoft takes on the Victorian era in *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*

➔ **The hooded brotherhood won't** be free-running into cinemas until late next year but there's not long to go before *Assassin's Creed Syndicate* arrives on PC and consoles. Featuring twin brother and sister Assassins, the historical action adventure is set in the much-anticipated Victorian era. Amidst London's Industrial Revolution in 1868, gang members Jacob and Evie Frye are taking on the Templars armed not only with the traditional hidden blade, but also an all-new Batman-style rope launcher to send them hurtling across the London skyline.

In a first for the series, both Assassins are playable in a beautiful open world London, and each have their own unique strengths and tools. "Jacob approaches situations more head-on. He's more focused towards fighting his way into and out of a situation so his skill tree is more geared towards combat," creative director Marc Alexis Cote says. "Evie is more strategic, more thoughtful and her skill tree's more geared towards stealth."

Stealth has been upgraded this time around as you switch your top hat for a hood, and missions deliver far more choice than previous sneaky outings. With London looking huge – there are seven unique districts to explore – and Charles Darwin and Dickens making starring appearances in future DLC, *Syndicate* is shaping up to be criminally good. ●

Assassin's Creed Syndicate releases on PS4 and Xbox One on 23 October and on PC one month later.



Such an authentic recreation you'll be able to smell the Thames.

SCI-FACT! The *Paranormal Activity* series has made over \$800 million on a total budget of just \$18 million.



FINAL WORD

You want answers?
We've got answers.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

The spooks are stepping out of the shadows in *Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension*

➔ The cinematic equivalent of an annual ride on a ghost train it may seem, but the *Paranormal Activity* series has a denser mythology than most give it credit for, each film answering one question while posing two dozen more. Not so with the sixth and final *Paranormal* film – *The Ghost Dimension* – which will address all of the series' lingering mysteries.

"The great thing about deciding this is going to be the last one in this series pre-emptively is we got the opportunity to answer all the questions that we've posed throughout," über-producer Jason Blum tells Red Alert. "Every movie prior to this was a tease. We'd give a little bit of information then give more questions around it. This is the opposite."

As well as offering closure, *The Ghost Dimension* offers another innovation – this time we'll actually see poltergeist Toby in all his ectoplasmic glory thanks to a camera designed for spirit photography. "We talked

about doing a ghost dimension in an earlier movie but didn't because where could you go afterwards? Once we decided it was the last movie, it opened up a lot of doors." Blum explains. "We talked a lot about what the ghosts would look like. All the things we weren't allowed to do in the previous movies we finally got to do with this one."

As the series that launched Blumhouse productions into the stratosphere and gave birth to its low cost, low risk production model, how does Blum feel about putting *Paranormal Activity* to bed? "I feel super lucky and grateful to have been a part of it from the beginning. It put us on the map and gave birth to our model. But I feel very lucky we got to duplicate the model. Our movies are made outside the system but distributed within the system, and that's a unique thing. So obviously it's bittersweet." ●

Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension opens on 23 October.

A WORLD BEYOND

Four further dimensions the *Paranormal Activity* series is leaving unexplored



THE FIFTH DIMENSION

➔ In Christopher Nolan's space, time and mind bending *Interstellar*, Matthew McConaughey's astronaut ends up in the Tesseract – a fifth dimensional space where he can see every moment in the past, present and future.



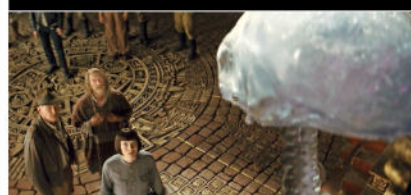
FLUIDIC SPACE

➔ This extradimensional realm from *Star Trek: Voyager* is home to Species 8472. The Borg declared war on them after entering Fluidic Space only to discover they were unable to assimilate the dimension's sole inhabitants.



THE BONELESS DIMENSION

➔ In top *Doctor Who* ep "Flatline" Earth is invaded by the Boneless – creatures from a universe with only two dimensions. They can suck the third dimension out of people in our universe, but may not realise the harm they cause.



THE LUCAS DIMENSION

➔ *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*'s much-maligned interdimensional beings come from "the space between spaces". They travel by UFO and taught humans to farm over 7,000 years ago.

SCI-FACT! Ingrid Oliver is one half of a comedy double act, Watson & Oliver, who had their own show on BBC Two.



FIVE MINUTES WITH... INGRID OLIVER

Osgood lives! UNIT's geek queen returns to *Doctor Who*

BACK FROM THE DEAD

“Somebody sent me a YouTube clip after my last episode had gone out. You know how they film reactions of people watching? Someone sent me a clip of a boy – he was a Northern lad – and when Osgood got pulverised or dematerialised or whatever it was he was like ‘Nooooo! Nooooo!’ He was really shouting at the telly. It was the funniest thing I’d ever seen and I was quite shocked. He was over it quite quickly, to be fair...”

TIME LORD FASHION STATEMENTS

“I have question marks on my collars... She’s expanding the range. She’s got a question mark waistcoat as well, which is a nod to the Seventh. If I did come back, would we just work our way through all the Doctors? I looked them up. The Sixth Doctor’s costume would certainly be interesting. You could take maybe an element of that. I loved Colin Baker, you see. I used to quite fancy him.”

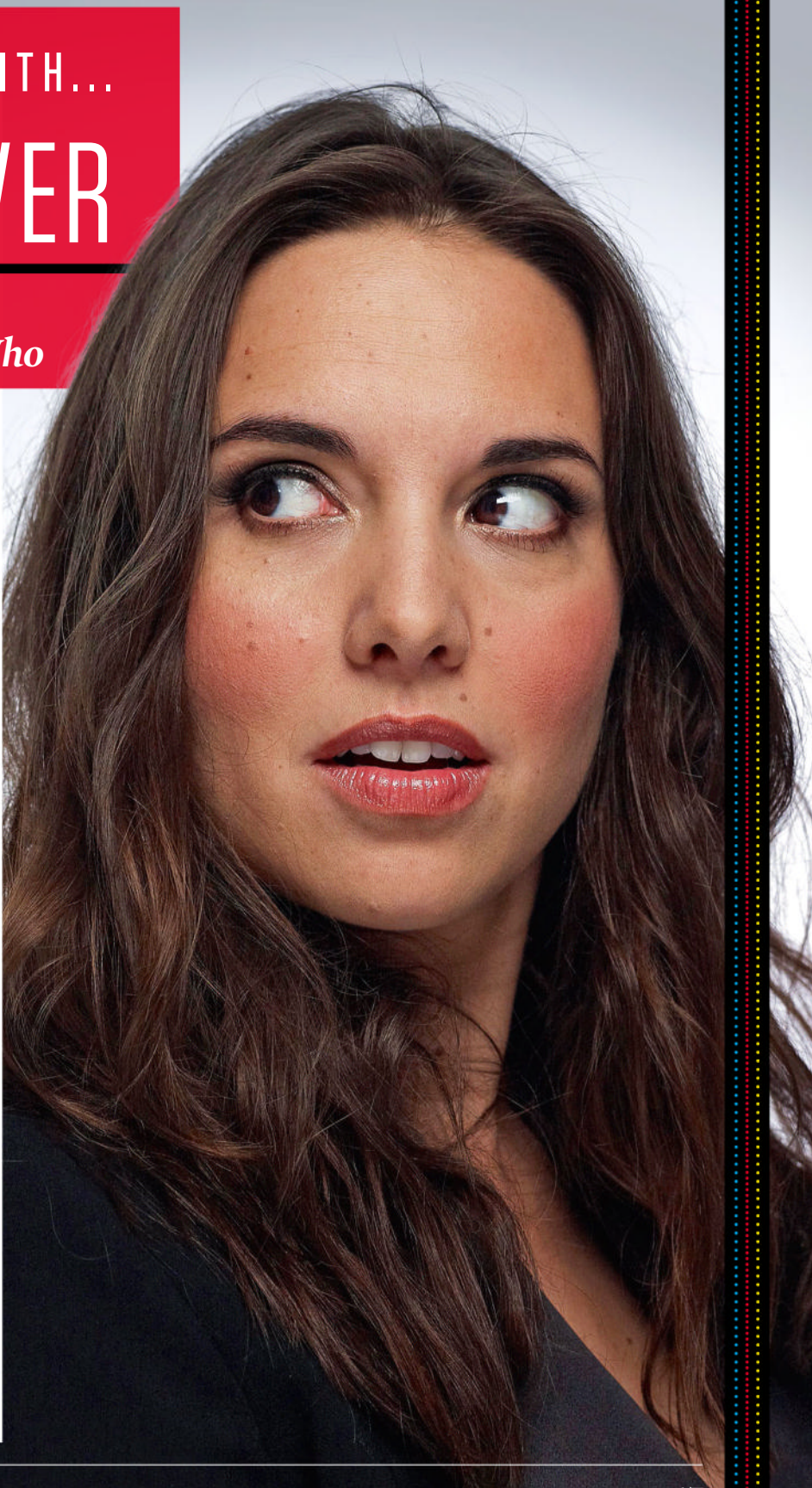
CRUSHING ON THE DOCTOR

“If you’re working in UNIT he’s kind of the main focus. I can see why you would get obsessed with someone like that. He’s like the One Direction of that world. And constantly changing, so you’ve got your pick of all of them. I don’t think it’s a crush. It’s just being in awe. It would be like meeting the biggest celebrity you could possibly imagine.”

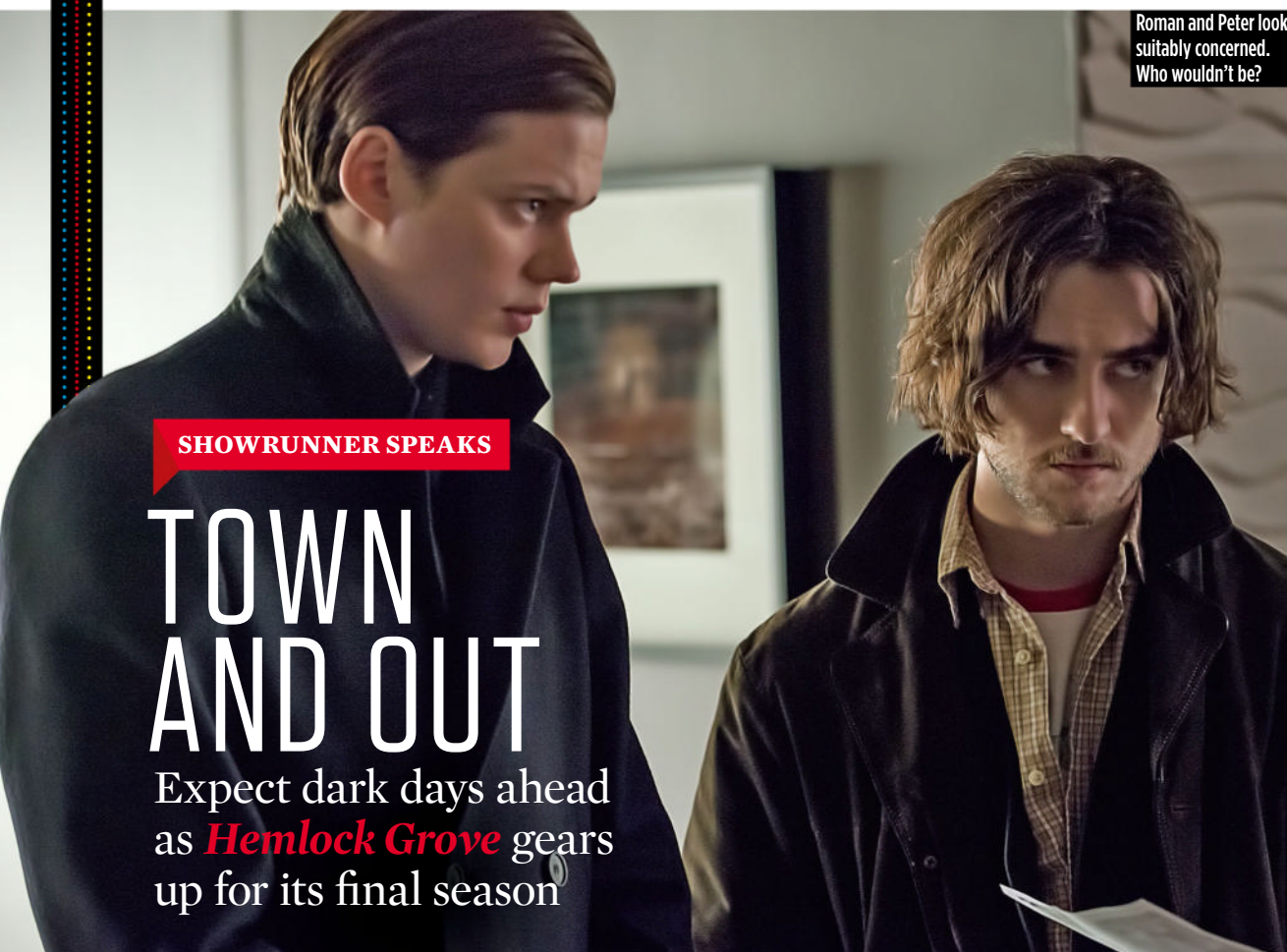
DON’T CALL ME SCARF FACE

“Did they give me the scarf when I left the first time? No they bloody didn’t. I didn’t ask for it because I assumed I wouldn’t get it. I thought well, we might need that again, fingers crossed... I feel like I’ve been cheated and robbed. You can buy them, can’t you? I might buy myself one... That would be really sad.”

Osgood comes back to Doctor Who in “The Zygon Invasion”, BBC One on 31 October.



SCI-FACT! *Hemlock Grove's* Richard Gunn was Sketchy in *Dark Angel* (which Charles Eglee co-created).



Roman and Peter look suitably concerned. Who wouldn't be?

SHOWRUNNER SPEAKS

TOWN AND OUT

Expect dark days ahead as *Hemlock Grove* gears up for its final season

➔ Though hardly a show that skimps on crazy, *Hemlock Grove's* second season ended on a cliffhanger than can only be described as "clinically certifiable", with Dr Spivak transforming into a giant CGI bat before kidnapping Roman's telekinetic super-baby (we told you: certifiable). Fortunately the third and final season will tell us exactly who, or rather what, Spivak is.

"I was sitting in the writers' room when that concept came creeping out from between my lips, and there were these looks of abject horror like, 'The guy has taken leave of his senses,'" showrunner Charles H Eglee says. "We did feel there was a responsibility to not only peg that back, but to do so in a way that felt like we'd earned it."

The search for baby Nadia will drive season three, but there's also a new threat in town – diseased Upir. "It seemed like that was an interesting, amorphous Big Bad," Eglee explains. "We didn't want something as monolithic as last year's Zealots. We wanted something that was a little more existentially threatening and less understood."

With Famke Janssen's master manipulator Olivia back to full health she takes the fight to the White Tower while striving to reunite her family by whatever means necessary, Eglee teasing: "It's really interesting watching Olivia try to make a deal with faith." There are also some new faces to watch out for, including Aitor Quantic (Richard Gunn), who strikes up a suspicious friendship

with Shelley; and Annie (Camille De Pazzis), a striking stranger who takes a shine to Roman. "I'm always interested when a new character comes to town because you wonder, are they going to be swallowed up by this toxic mess, or are they going to make the toxic mess worse?" Eglee says.

So is it safe to assume *Hemlock Grove* won't end on a happy note? "Well, you can expect dark days ahead. The question is: can a show reside in such darkness?" says Eglee. "This season asks: 'Are we getting nearer to the end times?' Because sometimes you look at the paper and feel like maybe that's what's going on. So we worked out a lot of our anxieties with the characters in *Hemlock Grove*, by grappling with this seemingly overwhelming darkness and wondering if maybe there isn't some light at the end." ●

The final season of Hemlock Grove can be found on Netflix from 23 October.

“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“IF I SEE ANOTHER SPIDER-MAN, I’M GOING TO HAVE TO ACTUALLY HANG MYSELF. I CAN’T DO IT ANY MORE!”

Don't expect Emma Thompson to turn up in a future Spidey movie.



AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

NEWBIES

➔ Arrow's Greg Berlanti developing *Brides* – a modern horror about the three brides of Dracula.
➔ *Supernatural's* Eric Kripke and *The Shield's* Shawn Ryan teaming up for time travel drama *Time*.
➔ Fox's *The Frankenstein Code* now called *Lookingglass*.
➔ Ian McDonald's *Luna: New Moon* optioned for TV by *NCIS* showrunner and CBS.

SHOWRUNNING

➔ Jenna Coleman set to leave *Doctor Who*

during series nine, while Alex Kingston

will guest star as River Song in the Christmas special.
➔ New episodes of *Black Mirror* on the way courtesy of Netflix.

Channel 4 has a "first look" offer for UK terrestrial broadcast.

➔ Fox UK will air *Agent Carter* season two "close" to the US broadcast.

➔ *Game Of Thrones* scoops 12 Emmys including Best Drama, Best Writing and Best Directing.



SCI-FACT! Corin Hardy's *Crow* remake recently suspended production after studio Relativity went bankrupt.

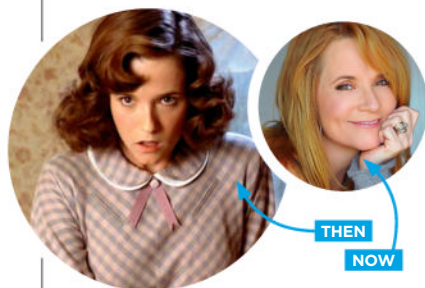


AFTERLIFE CELEBRATING ICONIC SCI-FI STARS

109

LEA THOMPSON

*Lorraine Baines in
Back To The Future*



According to *Back To The Future Part II*'s 2015 Lorraine, the mother of Marty McFly, is still happily living with George McFly after 50 years of marriage. In reality the woman behind the old age make-up, Lea Thompson, is five seasons into teen drama *Switched At Birth*. Not bad for a career which began with *Jaws 3-D*...

Would you like to play Lorraine again?

→ Of course, she was a great character and I am so happy to have had the chance to bring her to life in so many different incarnations.

What's the strangest request you have ever had from a fan?

→ I had a beautiful woman ask me to sign her hip and she came back an hour later with a tattoo in its place.

What would she be doing now?

→ We know what she would be doing now – rehydrating pizza from Pizza Hut and still nagging her family!

Did you keep any souvenirs?

→ The whole pink prom dress outfit from *Back To The Future I* and *II*. Shoes, earrings and all!

Is there anything from *Back To The Future* you wish was real?

→ Hoverboards – that is kind of universal, right?

What would it say on Lorraine's gravestone?

→ Lorraine Baines McFly-Tannen-McFly – a woman of many facets.



PARTY HARDY

Bojana Novakovic stars as Clare Hitchens, up for a scrap with demons.

HALLOWED GROUND

With his feature debut *The Hallow* Corin Hardy warns: don't go into the woods



Award-winning filmmaker and music video director Corin Hardy has always loved monsters – it's why his feature debut is dedicated to special effects maestro Ray Harryhausen. "As a child I fell in love with those monster movies with pure effects; that, combined with then getting into horror – and seeing *Alien*, *The Thing* and *Jaws* – meant I wanted to be a monster maker. I made short horror movies with as many elaborate effects, and make-ups, as possible. So, although I definitely have a wide appreciation of all kinds of movies, I did want to make a 'Creature Movie'."

Hardy's feature debut, *The Hallow*, is set in an Irish forest which isn't as empty as it first appears. "My idea was to do a fairytale, but played straight – in the sense that the story was grounded in reality to make it truly scary. I wanted to make it gritty. Also, I think it's great

when movies do have a grounding and are relevant; I always love George Romero movies because they have this underlying connection to what was going on at the time. Mine came from talking with the Irish location scout manager, who was telling me about the history of the rise and fall of Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' economy, and my story came together with the idea of this forest being sold."

While trying to fit in as much time as possible to promote *The Hallow* – it's "sort of my firstborn child, and I love it" – Hardy is already aware how it's being somewhat overshadowed by his next project: *The Crow*. "It's very exciting, like a dream come true," he says. "I was an obsessed fan of the original graphic novel, and the film. I dressed up as the Crow many times – and will continue to do so!"

The Hallow opens on 13 November.

SCI-FACT! Craven was lined up to direct *Superman IV: The Quest For Peace* but had disagreements with Christopher Reeve.

1939-2015

WES CRAVEN

Remembering the man who reinvented macabre movies



Arguably the most celebrated of all

contemporary horror directors, the man born Wesley Earl Craven on 2 August 1939 (who passed away on 30 August 2015 from brain cancer) was an unlikely nightmare-maker. Raised in a strict Baptist family in Cleveland, Ohio, Craven would study philosophy and writing at university and pursue a career in academia as a college lecturer. However, a move to New York City in the early 1970s introduced him to future *Friday The 13th* creator Sean Cunningham. The partnership gave him a chance to gain some experience producing low-budget softcore skin-flicks such as *Together* (1971).

But it was with 1972 classic *The Last House On The Left*, Craven's directorial debut and a provocative and powerful anti-Vietnam allegory, that the filmmaker really hit pay-dirt; today the movie is largely acknowledged as changing the gore-game entirely. Post-*Last House* Craven would branch out with the more fantastical thrills of *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977), and the Sharon Stone-starring suspense *Deadly Blessing* (1981), but he made his biggest mark as the father of razor-fingered dream-demon Freddy Krueger.

Hawking his script, *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, around Hollywood for years, Craven would meet only dismissal until an enterprising independent production outfit, New Line Cinema, opted to green light the supernatural slasher-shocker. The result – unleashed in 1984 – afforded Craven his most mainstream success to date.

After *Elm Street* made Craven's name bankable, he would continue to call the shots on a number of stylish, and classy, studio scare-flicks – with choice cuts including the gothic-atmospherics of *The Serpent And The Rainbow* (1987), the bewildering psycho-sickie *Shocker* (1989) and the class-carnage of *The People Under The Stairs* (1991). However, it was with *Scream* that Craven really returned to the multiplex, although its boffin box office would pigeonhole him into a franchise that did not seem to know when to stop stalking – spawning *Scream 2* (1997), *Scream 3* (2000) and a belated *Scream 4* (2011). In the interim, he attempted to re-imagine the werewolf genre with *Cursed* (2005) and won applause for his tense Hitchcockian thriller *Red Eye* (2005). Remaining busy right up until his final hours, Craven oversaw the *Scream* television series for MTV and had been collaborating on a comic book, *Coming Of Rage*, with Steve Niles.

Widely regarded as a gentleman and a good-humoured auteur, whose images haunted viewers for decades but who rarely raised his voice on the set, Craven changed scary movies forever. His throne in any horror film hall of fame is guaranteed. ●

© BRYCE DUFFY/CORBIS OUTLINE

SCI-FACT!

Today's Santa Claus combines elements of both the English Father Christmas and the Dutch Sinterkaas.

NEW AUTHOR

PAUL MELOY

THE CELEBRATED SHORT STORY SCRIBE'S FIRST NOVEL DELVES INTO A DARK FANTASY WORLD BEYOND OUR OWN



What is *The Night Clock* about?

→ It's about a psychiatric nurse called Phil Trevena who is faced with a terrible run of clinical fatalities. His previously successful career suddenly collapses and he's faced with the realisation that something seems to be out to get him. Overarching the story is a vast and unknowable supernatural dimension, infinite and ageless, through which a war has been raging for millennia.

What was the most challenging aspect of transitioning from short stories to a novel?

→ Finding the time and maintaining momentum. I eased from short stories to novellas quite comfortably and *The Night Clock* was originally going to be a novella but it became too complex. This challenged me to either walk away from it or develop it further and take it into new territory. It felt like the right time to get behind a novel – most of my writer friends had made the jump – and I was beginning to feel left out.

How did you go about building the world of *The Night Clock*?

→ It evolved out of a series of stories I wrote over about 20 years. I didn't set out to create a mythos or build a world but as the characters appeared there was a connection there I couldn't ignore.



Which SF authors would you like to be compared to in a dream review?

→ Harlan Ellison, Bruno Schulz, Ray Bradbury, Mervyn Peake. Any one of those boys would be grand!

The Night Clock is published by Solaris on 10 November.



SEASONAL CHEER

Nobody has copyright on Santa Claus, so the character's up for grabs!

SUPER SANTA

Grant Morrison gets his claws into the Christmas spirit with *Klaus*



"It makes sense to release a book

about Santa Claus around Christmas since reading about the frozen North in July isn't nearly as much fun!" Published next month by Boom! and illustrated by Dan Mora, the festive season is coming early this year thanks to Grant Morrison. Described as "Santa Claus Year Zero", *Klaus* depicts Father Christmas as you've never seen him before.

"The impetus for the book came more from thinking about how I'd like to have my own big iconic character like Superman or Doctor Who, and then alighting on the notion of making Santa Claus more explicitly into a superhero franchise," Morrison says. "Everyone knows him but nobody owns him, so anyone can tell Santa Claus stories."

With many other aliases including Kris Kringle and St Nick, Santa boasts even more secret identities than Bruce Wayne. Comparing the six-issue miniseries to "Arthur Conan Doyle doing a Batman graphic novel," Morrison draws

links between the Caped Crusader's Batcave and Batmobile, and Santa's Grotto and Sleigh. "I couldn't resist the opportunity to provide origin stories for all of these things," he says. "But Rudolph is a copyright character and was out of bounds although we nod in his direction."

Indicating that we can also expect an appearance from the Elves, *Klaus* delves into Santa's mythic past rather than his increasingly monetised contemporary incarnation. "I'm stripping the character back to his roots and rebuilding him as an exercise in amusing myself and entertaining my readers," explains Morrison, who is more interested in Santa as an individual figure rather than the holiday itself. "This is a fantasy story, part *Lord Of The Rings* and part *Batman Begins*. Other than this comic being a glaring example of the commercialisation of Christmas, it has very little to say about that aspect of the festival."

Klaus #1 is published by Boom! on 4 November.

DEEP THOUGHT

Thought Bubble, the annual celebration of sequential art, returns for its ninth year with a host of talent

➔ When it launched in 2007 the organisers behind Thought Bubble had modest ambitions: to promote comics, graphic novels and animation as an important national and international cultural art-form. Since then Thought Bubble has gone from strength to strength to the point that it now takes place across a full week with a jam-packed programme of events at a variety of venues across Leeds. It all culminates in a full-blown two day convention in the heart of the city.

The biggest names in comics have attended previous Thought Bubbles, and this year is no different, with top guests including Rick Remender, Mark Buckingham, Andy Diggle, Kieron Gillen, Jamie McKelvie, Olly Moss, Jock, Monty Nero, Scott Snyder, Becky Cloonan, Ben Templesmith and brilliant internet surrealist Joan Cornellà.

There'll be the usual mix of panels, screenings, workshops and live events taking place across the week (keep an eye on the website for the full schedule). The winners of the British Comic Awards will also be announced at this year's convention, recognising the best writers and illustrators from the last 12 months of comics, while this year's Comic Forum will take an in-depth look at politics in comics and graphic novels.

Aspiring comic creators have the chance to get their work published in a special Thought Bubble Anthology from Image Comics, and displayed at Leeds Central Library during the festival. Alas, if you're reading this then you've already missed the boat as entries closed on

9 October. You haven't missed the chance to appear in the pages of *2000 AD*, however, as the house that Dredd built is holding writing and art competitions which could win you paid work. Wannabe wordsmiths are being invited to pitch ideas for a brand new *Future Shock* story in just two minutes, while artists must draw their version of a set *Terror Tale* script. Exact times and dates are TBC, but it'll be first come first served, so don't dawdle Earthlings. ●

<http://thoughtbubblefestival.com>

DATE
9-15 November
LOCATION
Venues around Leeds



Phonogram by Jamie McKelvie and Kieron Gillen.



You know the day will be better if you come dressed like this!



BOB PETERS (2)

DATE
5 November - 3 January
LOCATION
Le Café Pixel Gallery, Marseille, France

ART WARS

Journey across the channel for the wonders of **Star Wars: An Art Odyssey**



➔ Part of the joy of the UK convention scene is that no matter where you live there's an event on your doorstep. But sometimes it's worth making the effort to go that little bit further, especially in the case of *Star Wars: An Art Odyssey*, an officially licensed *Star Wars* exhibit taking place in Marseilles for the next few months.

The Poster Posse are behind the event, in collaboration with Le Café Pixel Gallery and Acme Archives Ltd. Between them they've created 80 original pieces of art for the exhibit which will bring to life the previous *Star Wars* movies (the original trilogy more so than the prequels, we'd guess) and scratch the surface of what is imagined for *The Force Awakens*.

Want to combine your trip with another geeky event? The exhibit will be the main attraction of the *Star Wars* Villiage during Marseille's Hero Festival convention, which takes place on 7-8 November and boasts all manner of science fiction and fantasy themed happenings. Bon voyage! ●

<http://bit.ly/SWodysey>

COMING UP

BCP INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR & COMIC EXPO

22 November

Head to the Mercure Hotel in Bristol to seek out a bargain or sell your own books/comics (tables cost £25 and include two guest passes). <http://bit.ly/BCPexpo>

WALES COMIC CON

30 November

Sylvester McCoy, Gareth David-Lloyd and *Game Of Thrones*' Ian McElhinney are among the guests at this year's dragon country con. www.walescomiccon.com/

NEWCASTLE FILM AND COMIC CON

21-22 November

It's not just celebs signing autographs - manga, cosplay, comics and gaming are all represented at this NE con. <http://bit.ly/NFCC267>

WIGAN COMIC CON

5 December

Expect celebs, cars, cosplay and Iron Man in a top hat and monocle (latter not confirmed, but makes a fine logo) at the bigger than ever Wigan event. www.wigancomiccon.co.uk/

CARDIFF INDEPENDENT COMIC EXPO

12 December

CICE's mini-expo will showcase small press creators and publishers. Maybe you'll see the next Robert Kirkman! <http://bit.ly/CICE267>

We'll beat your price or give you £25

Find something you want on Amazon, John Lewis, Currys or another major retailer, then tell Beat My Price and we could save you up to 12%.

If we can't, then we'll send you £25 to spend* at bespokeoffers.co.uk - simple as that.



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STAR TREK BEYOND

The reboot crew gear up for their five-year mission

IN LIKE LIN

With JJ Abrams now adding lens flare to a galaxy far, far away – though still very much producing – the new hands on the *Star Trek* wheel are those of *Fast & Furious* director Justin Lin. Paramount are hoping Lin'll bring the nitro-powered action-nous that propelled *Fast & Furious* into this decade's biggest sleeper franchise.

BOLDLY GOING

This isn't going to be a bad cover version of an earlier, better *Star Trek* movie. *Beyond* will see the USS Enterprise embarking into fresh territory as it sets out on its fabled five-year mission: "to explore new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilisations and boldly go where no man has gone before." Or something along those lines.

OUTER SPACED

Fans can expect their slice of gold to come fried. Simon Pegg doubles up his front-of-camera responsibilities with some scriptwriting duties too, along with Doug Jung. Earlier drafts of *Beyond* had been rejected for being a little bit too, well, Trekkie, so the personable Pegg's been drafted in to make the movie more accessible to the Federation averse: expect a massive, fun and funny adventure in fresh, strange lands away from Starfleet's politicking (with a splash of Klingons).

BACK ON BOARD

There are no changes on the bridge of the USS Enterprise: the whole cast is back for a third run out, from Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto right down to Scotty's pal Keenser and Kirk's pal Carol Marcus. But this isn't going to be a rerun of the Kirk and Spock bromance. With the captain's dedication to exploring virgin territory leading his attentions elsewhere, the likes of Spock and Dr McCoy

will get time to get to know each other. It's unlikely this will make them get on better, though.

THE FUTURE'S FEMALE

Perhaps to make up for *Darkness*' gratuitous-skimpies fail, Abrams has pushed for new female characters. The biggest addition turned up in that leaked green-screen crash-landing footage (along with the crew's nifty new Star-Lord jackets): a bleached-out alien (played by *Kingsman*'s Sofia Boutella, below), whose athletic abilities will come in handy should the crew just happen to find themselves in a rough spot. The second of these roles will be giving Bones a real reason to be grouchy: the soon to be ex-Mrs Leonard McCoy (Lydia Wilson). The third is the president of the whole goddamn United Federation of Planets – expect a big name making the most of a short amount of screentime.

EVIL ELBA

This is a Bad Robot production so plot info has been locked down tighter than a Tribble's bumhole. It's a lock that Idris Elba is playing the Big Bad, though rumours that this character will be a Klingon have been denied – which, if you remember the whole John Harrison/Khan shenanigans, probably means he is. Or isn't.

WHEN TO EXPECT IT?

Star Trek Beyond opens on 22 July 2016. ●



“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“THAT WAS MY DECISION. THAT WAS NOT SOMETHING I WAS PUSHED INTO... I'M SURE IN 30 YEARS I'LL BE EVEN MORE PROUD OF IT.”

Alice Eve gives her version of what happened with that underwear scene in *Star Trek Into Darkness*.



AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

CASTING CALL

→ Amanda Seyfried and Balthazar Getty sign up for *Twin Peaks* season three.
→ Richard E Grant to join *Game Of Thrones*.

And Pilou Asbæk will play Euron Greyjoy.
→ Xander Berkeley bags a “potentially long-term stint” on *The Walking Dead*.

→ Theo Rossi (Shades), Mahershala Ali (Cottonmouth), Simone Missick (Misty Knight) and Alfre Woodard (Mariah Dillard) sign up for *Luke Cage*.

→ 24's Glenn Morshower cast as General Sam Lane in *Supergirl*.
→ Shazad Latif to play Dr Jekyll in *Penny Dreadful*'s third season.

NEWSWARP

→ Eve Myles and Kai Owen to star in *Torchwood* audio drama *Forgotten Lives*.
→ *The Goonies* to become an “immersive theatre show”.

→ *Dan Dare* audio series in the works from B7 Media.
→ New Radio 4 adaptation of *The Stone Tapes* to air on Halloween.



REX (4)

SCI-FACT! Mike Colter is about to appear in Marvel's *Jessica Jones* as hero Luke Cage.

STAR Q&A

LAURA REGAN

MINORITY REPORT'S ALPHA PRECOG AGATHA TELLS RED ALERT ABOUT EXPANDING THE CHARACTER FOR TV



Did it intimidate you to step into a character so synonymous with the Spielberg film?

→ No, my take on my character is totally fresh. Samantha Morton did a stunning job with the film and I can't begin to think anything about that so I just leave that on its own. I started with the story and the rich mythology of the PreCogs and the character of Agatha.

Is being well-versed in the film a requirement to watch the series?

→ No, it's 10 years after the end of the film so we are in a world where you really don't have to have seen the film. It's the world of 2065 and we've got a futuristic crime drama where we're able to see the crimes before they happen, so it's about stopping the crime rather than solving the crime, but not in a rote procedural way.

How do the PreCogs factor into this narrative?

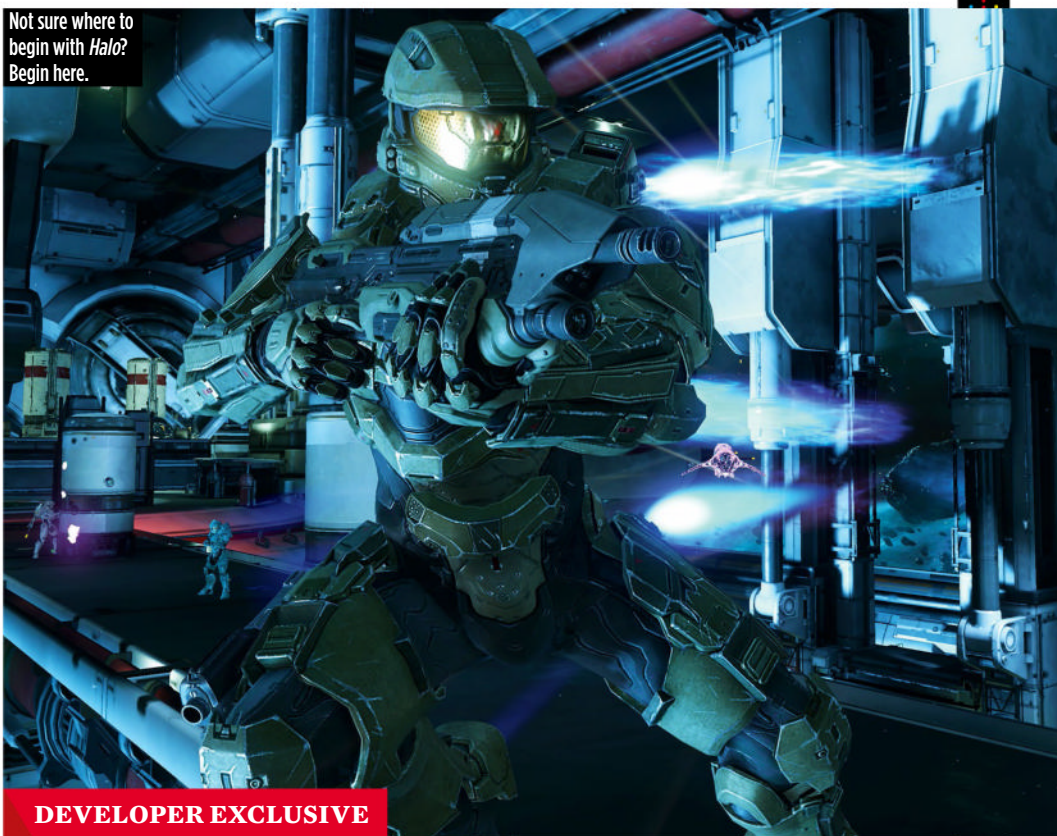
→ Dash (Stark Sands) is my brother and he's haunted by these visions and feels a need to absolutely do something about it. My character has taken a very different approach. She has said society took advantage of me and wants to reject it entirely. She lives in isolation and is a recluse for her own sanity.

What's Agatha's journey back to PreCrime?

→ I think she may be forced back into the world because she has the most power and vision. She may get back into the fray and will she become more calculating or will her bitterness about her past make her do things differently?

Minority Report airs on Fox in the US. A UK channel is TBC.

Not sure where to begin with *Halo*? Begin here.



DEVELOPER EXCLUSIVE

RING WORLD

Master Chief has plenty of company in the epic *Halo 5: Guardians*



Craggy super-soldier Master Chief

has been the face (well, visor) of Xbox and the *Halo* series for over a decade, but times have changed. Today's gamers expect more from a protagonist than spotless principles and some gravelly quips, and there's the usual problem of impenetrability at this stage in the storyline. Developer 343 Industries' solution? Make Chief a vigilante, then have hitman Locke (played by Mike Colter) investigate him.

"Rather than create this über-expository cinematic for the story thus far, we wanted a narrative that was self-contained," studio head Josh Holmes tells Red Alert. "By having a character like Locke, we can play the part of the [layman] coming in and asking questions that new players might ask."

Locke's arrival affects more than just the game's cutscenes: you'll switch between his and Chief's perspective from mission to mission.

Each protagonist is backed throughout by a trio of side characters (including Nathan Fillion's Buck) who are playable in online co-op – a bump in player headcount that has obliged 343 to craft bigger environments and a deadlier enemy cast. Foes range from old enemies the Covenant to the newer Prometheans. Ensemble story aside, *Halo 5* brings a colossal new head-to-head mode, Warzone, which sees 24 players fighting not just each other but mobs of AI-controlled aggressors.

It all adds up to a fascinating deviation from formula, and 343 is understandably nervous. "It was a lot more challenging than we thought, and there were points where it didn't feel like it was coming together," confesses 343 co-founder Bonnie Ross. "It's a huge bet for us." ●

Halo 5: Guardians is released on Xbox One on 27 October.

Red Alert Image Bank *Where pictures are greater than words*

SCI-FACT! In 2007 the United States Postal Service released a collection of 15 *Star Wars* stamps illustrated by Drew Struzan.



STAMP DUTY

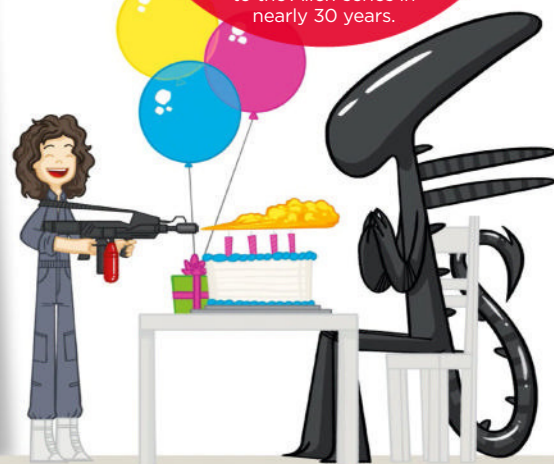
📧 To mark the imminent theatrical return of R2-D2 and co, Royal Mail is issuing 18 *Star Wars*-themed stamps featuring classic characters and some new faces from *The Force Awakens*. They'll be available from 20 October, with six further stamps to come, featuring top vehicles and spaceships such as the Millennium Falcon and a TIE fighter.

HORROR HOTEL

👁️ You have to hand it to *American Horror Story*'s marketing team, Ryan Murphy's anthology series does promotional posters better than almost any other show out there. Just look at this art deco beaut from the fifth season, subtitled *Hotel*. We've no idea how Lady Gaga's bloodsucking countess gets anywhere with a dress that long though (or is it her hair?).

HOME TRUTHS

👁️ Thought HR Giger's unstoppable killing machine spent its spare time punching holes in space marine brains or bursting out of people's stomachs? You thought wrong. New illustrated book *Alien Next Door*, from cult artist Joey Spiotto (published by Titan on 6 November), reveals a softer side to the xenomorph as he goes about his daily business feeding Jones the cat or celebrating his latest birthday with Ripley. It's the best thing to happen to the *Alien* series in nearly 30 years.



© ROYAL MAIL/DISNEY/LUCASFILM

SCI-FACT!

Doctor Strange temporarily wore a mask in issue 177 (February 1969) to make him look more like a traditional superhero.

STAR WATCH

A NEWS HOPE

→ We've seen just a few seconds of Kylo Ren and Captain Phasma, and a single photo of General Hux. Supreme Leader Snoke, meanwhile, is just a name and Andy Serkis in a performance-capture leotard. Even so, we already (more or less) know there'll be a new baddie in the Rian Johnson-directed *Star Wars: Episode VIII*.

Benicio del Toro's involvement was first rumoured back in July, and he let some details slip to Spanish news node *Rac1*. "I think we start shooting in March," he said. "The thing is, they don't let me talk too much about it. I'm like the villain. But we'll see." A few weeks later he backtracked slightly, claiming "I don't know if he's a villain. People are saying that, but it's like they read a different script than I read." So he's in it, but his moral compass remains intriguingly undefined.

One of the big mysteries that's arisen from *The Force Awakens*' publicity drive is about to be solved. Yes, if you've wondered how C-3PO ended up with a red arm, this plot point appears to be the main hook of Marvel's new *Star Wars Special: C-3PO* comic by James Robinson and Tony Harris, due in December.

And finally, *Star Wars: Aftermath* author Chuck Wendig has hit back at fans who've complained about a gay character in his book. "You're not the good guys," he responded. "You're the shitty, oppressive, totalitarian Empire. If you can imagine a world where Luke Skywalker would be irritated that there were gay people around him, you completely missed the point of *Star Wars*."



Next up in lost arm stories: the Wampa and Pondo Baba.

It's the teddy bears that have got us intrigued.



WRITER EXCLUSIVE

STRANGE DAYS

Doctor Strange is getting a new comic series ahead of next year's big-screen bow



Like the Guardians of the Galaxy

before their cinematic success, Doctor Strange has never been one of Marvel's frontline characters. But with Benedict Cumberbatch set to play the Sorcerer Supreme on the big screen next year, Marvel is hoping that the new *Doctor Strange* monthly by Jason Aaron and Chris Bachalo will elevate the Master of Mystic Arts to top drawer status.

"It's been quite a few years since Doctor Strange has had his own ongoing series, so this feels like a fresh start," says Aaron. "That said, we're not trying to reinvent the wheel. The elements of *Doctor Strange* stories that long-time fans love will still be there. I want this to still be a book that feels unique within the landscape of the Marvel Universe. You can do stories in *Doctor Strange* that you can't do in any other series. If anything, we're just trying to go even weirder and wilder than ever before."

Promising that trustee sidekick Wong shows up in issue two "as we get our first tour of the Sanctum Sanctorum, aka the weirdest residence in the entire Marvel Universe," Aaron will introduce some new supporting characters and a big new villain. "They will shake up Doctor Strange's world in a profound way."

Having previously collaborated on *Wolverine And The X-Men*, Aaron reveals that Bachalo was the only artist considered. "He's said that this feels like a cross between what we did and what he did for Vertigo on *Shade The Changing Man*, which sounds like a pretty cool mix to me," he says. "Doctor Strange is one of those characters that has to have striking art to make it work, and Chris is laying down some of his wildest, most imaginative and emotional pages to date! I just try to stay out of the dude's way." ●

Doctor Strange #1 is out now.



Nick Setchfield's

DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



MOON SHOT!

LUNA PARK

That's one small step for man, one giant leap for **Tom Cruise**... Yes, the mighty-gnashed *Mission: Impossible* star is heading to the Moon. And knowing his newfound love of crowdpleasing practical stuntwork he'll be clutching the business end of a Saturn V as he does so. Cruise will reunite with *Edge Of Tomorrow*

helmer **Doug Liman** – who's also directing him in upcoming '80s thriller *Mena* – on this tech-heavy adventure, the tale of a team of renegade space experts who head to Earth's satellite using stolen equipment in order to exploit a valuable new power source. Liman's been trying to make this one for a while – **Chris Evans** and **Andrew Garfield** were in the frame during its initial

development back in 2011. Paramount Pictures is banking that Cruise's stardom will give this project sufficient thrust to finally blast off.

PROMETHEUS NO MORE!

ALIEN: PARADISE LOST

No, that's not the title of **Neill Blomkamp**'s upcoming entry in the *Alien* franchise. That would be

too neat, too sensible, altogether too easy for us to file our Blu-rays by. It's actually the official name of **Ridley Scott**'s *Prometheus* sequel, a move that clearly jettisons the baggage of 2012's middlingly-received prequel in favour of the established xenomorphic brand. "We're heading back to why and how and when the beast was invented," Scott tells *HeyUGuys*. "We'll go back into the back door

of the very first *Alien* that I did 30 [erm, 36] years ago.” Filming on the Milton-flavoured follow-up begins in February with the story set to focus on a journey to the homeworld of the enigmatic Engineers. The supernaturally busy Scott hints that there may be up to four films in this strand of the *Alien* mythos...

THE LIGHT STUFF!

BLADE RUNNER 2

🔥 Cinematographer **Roger Deakins** brought a distinct touch of *Blade Runner* to the Shanghai scenes in *Skyfall*. Now he has the chance to light Rick Deckard's acid-drenched dystopia itself. But hold those Venetian blinds! Don't look for a slavish recreation of Ridley Scott's original visual aesthetic in the sequel. “Obviously it has elements that connect it to the original,” Deakins tells *Screen Crush*, “but it's going to stand alone by itself as a movie. And I'm not going to do shafts of light coming through a window with rain just for the sake of doing shafts of light and rain...” Helmer **Denis Villeneuve**, meanwhile, tells *Crave Online* that the new movie will finally address the thorny issue of whether Deckard is or isn't a replicant. “I love mystery. I love shadows. I love doubts. I would just want to say to the fans that we will take care of that mystery. I will take care of it.” *Blade Runner 2: Beyond The Origami...*

DASHING BACK!

INCREDIBLES 2

🔥 Director **Brad Bird** reveals he's deep in development on the sequel to *The Incredibles*, the 2004 Pixar hit that brought a spandex-clad smirk to the dawn of the 21st century superhero boom. “I have the story arc,” he confirms to *Collider*. “I'm probably three quarters through the script, first pass through the script, but we're already [story]boarding parts of it.” The original, of course, hit at a time when a big-screen superhero franchise was a novelty, not the norm. “Now there are 400 billion of them,” says Bird, “and there's a new superhero movie every two



ALSO BURNING

→ **Sherlock's Lara Pulver** joining *Underworld 5* alongside **Merlin's Bradley James**... **Rupert Wyatt** no longer directing *Gambit*... **Olivia Cooke** to star in **Steven Spielberg's** *Ready Player One*... **Woody Harrelson** playing the villain in *War Of The Planet Of The Apes*... **Bryce Zabel** producing alien abduction tale *Captured*, based on the real-life Betty and Barney Hill story... **Sigourney Weaver** and **Ernie Hudson** latest confirmed cameos in *Ghostbusters* reboot... *ET's* **Henry Thomas** joining *Outja 2*... **Rachel McAdams** officially signed as female lead in *Doctor Strange*... Sony rebooting *Men In Black* as a trilogy... **Eva Green** and **Sean Bean** rumoured for villain duty in *Wonder Woman*... **McG** in talks to direct horror comedy *The Babysitter* for New Line... Twentieth Century Fox planning movie version of *Mega Man* videogame... **Kenneth Branagh** directing Disney's adaptation of **Eoin Colfer's** *Artemis Fowl*... **Michael B Jordan** circling MGM's vampire comedy *Blood Brothers*... **Maze Runner's** **Wes Ball** helming fantasy *Fall Of Gods*... Warners rumoured to be developing an *Akira* trilogy...

“The mighty-gnashed star is heading to the Moon”

weeks. What you don't want to do is trot over the same turf in the same way everyone else is. So we're trying to keep it focused in the area that our film was, which was a little bit more about characters and relationships and stuff like that, and see where that takes us.” *The Incredibles 2* is targeting a 16 November 2016 release. No capes!

ATOMIC BREATH VS BANANA BREATH!

KONG: SKULL ISLAND

🔥 The *King Kong* prequel has jumped studio skyscrapers, clambering from Universal Pictures to Warner Bros like some grunting, tribesman-trampling, chest-thumping overextended giant gorilla metaphor. And for once that's a potentially exciting piece of behind-the-scenes Hollywood politics. Warner Bros brought us *Godzilla* last year and word is the studio's already prepping a big screen square-off between the prehistoric beast and the uber-ape. It won't be the first time that the pair have gone toe to toe, of course – Toho Studios brought us the loveably underfunded *King Kong Vs Godzilla* back in 1964. Don't look for any supersized lizards in *Kong: Skull Island*, though. We won't see the screen-shaking smackdown until after *Godzilla 2*. But the movie's script is reportedly being tweaked to include Project Monarch, the monster-hunting operation seen in *Godzilla*. **Thomas Mann** and **John Goodman** join a cast that already boasts **Tom Hiddleston**, **Brie Larson** and **Samuel L Jackson**. The **Jordan Vogt-Roberts** helmed movie is unleashed on 10 March 2017.

NANNY STATE!

MARY POPPINS 2

🔥 1964's *Mary Poppins* may be the gold standard when it comes to Boxing Day comfort viewing – practically perfect in every way, you might say – but that hasn't stopped Hollywood from pulling a desperately belated sequel out of its chim chim cher-ee. Yes, Disney has just hired the team behind fairytale-mashing musical *Into The Woods* – including director **Rob Marshall** – to create a new adventure for the otherworldly English nanny, played by Julie Andrews back in '64, of course. Rumoured to be set in the 1930s, some 20 years after the original, the sequel will draw inspiration from other books by Poppins' creator **PL Travers** (prepare for some potential grave-spinning, given her opinion of the first film). So who will hold the flying broly this time around? *Edge Of Tomorrow's* **Emily Blunt** is said to be in with a shout – and let's face it, she'd be supercalifragilisticexpialadocious.

ARE YOU SQUIDDING?

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

🔥 X-franchise supremo **Bryan Singer** is about to take a deep dive. He's boarding the *Nautilus* for a new adaptation of Jules Verne's sub-aquatic classic. It's a much-told tale: astonishingly the first big-screen version was by cinematic pioneer **Georges Méliès** in 1907, with another silent version following in 1916 (we understand Edwardian audiences pelted the screen with hats as they cried “Too soon for a reboot, by gad!”). Disney's 1954 take starring James Mason remains the best known Hollywood *Nemo* while recent attempts by **David Fincher** and **McG** to return Verne's story to the screen have gone adrift in the merciless Sargasso of Development Hell. Singer claims it's “a story I've wanted to retell since childhood. I promise this will be an epic and emotional adventure for all ages! An adventure very dear to my heart.” The screenplay's by **Rick Sordélet** and **Dan Studeny**. ●



Illustration by Paul Cemmick

Worlds Of SFX

There's a whole universe to explore beyond this magazine

THIS MONTH ON
gamesradar+



Five things to look out for on our massive entertainment portal at gamesradar.com/sfx

1 With *The Walking Dead* back on our TV screens we're taking a look at the maddest theories from the hit TV show, including the suggestion that Rick is still in that coma... <http://bit.ly/wdtheories>

2 *The Force Awakens* is just two months away. Make sure you're up-to-date with the latest news and analysis by tuning into our chat show from a galaxy far, far away, *Stay On Target*. <http://bit.ly/swontarget>

3 They said James Bond would return, and he has in the action-packed *SPECTRE* (check out our feature on p54). Look out for a review of Daniel Craig's latest outing as 007 ahead of its release on 26 October.

4 The new season of *Doctor Who* got off to a tense start with an unexpected trip to Skaro making life awkward for the Doctor and Clara. Make sure you check out our weekly fact-packed, in-depth reviews of every episode. <http://bit.ly/doctorwhoS9>

5 The last few years haven't been short of new undead films or TV shows, which is why we've counted down the top 30 zombie movies of all time. Which is your favourite? <http://bit.ly/bestzombies>



Have a sit down for our *Walking Dead* reviews and features.

Magazines

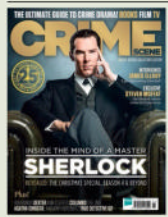
ROBOTS AND SPACESHIPS



→ Like robots? How about spaceships? If the answer is an emphatic "yes" (and who'd say "no"?), then you're in luck because our latest 148-page special is dedicated entirely

to sci-fi's timeless tin cans, from False Maria in *Metropolis* to Poe Dameron's funky new X-wing in *The Force Awakens*. There's interviews with the likes of Robert Llewellyn and Millennium Falcon designer Roger Christian, countdowns of the top 50 robots and spaceships of all time and some of the coolest spacecraft cutaways in the known galaxy. Grab it today!
ON SALE: NOW!

CRIME SCENE: ISSUE ONE



→ Here's something to investigate. A brand new quarterly magazine from the makers of *SFX* and *Total Film* is in shops now. Your complete guide to

watercooler crime drama on TV, bestselling crime fiction and the cream of crime cinema, *Crime Scene* is packed with exclusive interviews, set reports, commentary and analysis from the best writers, as well as reviews of all the latest books and TV shows. Check out issue one for red-hot leads on *Sherlock*, *Elementary*, *Dexter*, *The Jinx*, Ian Rankin, James Ellroy and lots more.
ON SALE: NOW!

COMIC HEROES



→ *Comic Heroes* returns with its first issue since 2014 and a brand new look! Kicking things off is an in-depth guide to Marvel's All-New, All-Different relaunch. If DC is more your thing

then we have a preview of the exciting new slate of Vertigo titles. Outside of the big two we look at how Image are ripping up the rulebook when it comes to contemporary comics, find out about Grant Morrison's bold reinvention of, er, Santa, and talk music and magic with *This Damned Band* author Paul Cornell. Plus news, reviews, Q&As and a whole lot more besides.
ON SALE: NOW!

TOTAL FILM



→ Dust off the winter duvet because the latest issue of *Total Film* is set to chill, from the ghostly goings on in Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak* – with word from GdT, Tom

Hiddleston and more – to *TF*'s enormous Winter Preview. Need the inside scoop on Vin Diesel's *D&D* addiction from the horse's mouth? Want to know Ryan Reynolds' real feelings on doing *Deadpool*? Dying to know exactly how much *Force Awakens* knowledge *TF* managed to extract from Domhnall Gleeson? It's all inside. Warm up your newsagent with a nice hug, eh?
ON SALE: NOW!

Next Issue

STAR WARS THE FORCE AWAKENS

WE HAVE A GOOD FEELING
ABOUT THIS

Plus!*

- + DC's TV superheroes
- + Victor Frankenstein
- + Jessica Jones
- + The Man In The High Castle

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First Contact

//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////



THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

RUSSELL LEWIN, PRODUCTION EDITOR



There are many ways to get in touch with us here at SFX –

Facebook, Twitter, email, hell – even old-fashioned envelopes with a letter inside – so you've really no excuse not to. And you have. This issue you've taken the time to tell us what you think about the magazine itself, along with paying tribute to Wes Craven and yet more *Fantastic Four* grumbles. It's the topic that won't die. Unlike, presumably, the FF movie franchise. Anyway, keep writing, you lovely lot; you'll find all the contact details on the page opposite.

SFX Hot Topic Your views on the month's big issue

#WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NEW-LOOK SFX?

- ➔ **The Llama God, Twitter** My favourite thing about the revamp: seeing Nick Setchfield's face peeking out from above the Development Hell title. My least favourite thing: being reminded that time has passed by the updated contributor photos at the front.
- SFX** How do you think we feel?
- ➔ **John Mangan, Twitter** LOVE the new look to SFX (my copy of #265 just arrived). Much clearer, easier to read and better organised. I can even read Rants & Raves without employing an electron microscope. Well done.
- SFX** Oh no, we'll have to be careful what we say in them now!
- ➔ **Bart Lockhorst, Twitter** The Doctor's had 12 regenerations, how many has SFX had now? Does it experience a period of instability too?
- SFX** We don't like to talk about it.

- ➔ **Ittatto23, Twitter** Great job on the redesign. And I'm glad the letters title has been changed! Less gloomy than Post Apocalypse!
- SFX** We are now post-Post Apocalypse.
- ➔ **MrFraig, Twitter** Oh, you've redecorated?! I don't like it... ;)
- ➔ **SharkOfLargo, Twitter** Love the new look. Always nice to have a freshen up once in a while.
- SFX** That's why I've just had my first shower in a month.
- ➔ **MattSaysThings, Twitter** Lunchtime reading @ SFXmagazine what a great new look inside! Well done chaps and fine ladies of the team!
- ➔ **Ttatto23, Twitter** Great job on the redesign of the magazine guys! Very '60s retro sci-fi-ish!
- ➔ **Steenschapiro, gamesradar** Nice design, but the letters page is especially short. The letters page is almost unreadable now, with its new, short Twitter-like statements. Might as well surf the internet for that kind of superficiality.
- ➔ **John Porter, Facebook** Bloody good read as per usual – liking the new design too. Not too far removed from its predecessor :-)
- ➔ **Marc Ofner, Facebook** Got the latest copy today (#265). New look is a definite improvement. Much clearer and easier to read. However, why have such a crisp, fresh

Reviews Get sci-fi news, reviews and features at gamesradar.com/sfx

MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

All Miller, no filler

★★★★★

by **JOHN MANGAN**

THE MAD MAX MOVIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT THE same thing: a group of survivors in a post-apocalyptic world, fighting for their lives. But this time, the stakes are higher than ever.

It's a film with a simple premise, but it's one that's been done before. And yet, it's one that's never been done better.

Miller's vision of a world where the only way to survive is to be the most violent is a vision that's both terrifying and inspiring.

It's a film that's both a love letter to the genre and a warning of what's to come.

It's a film that's both a celebration of the genre and a warning of what's to come.

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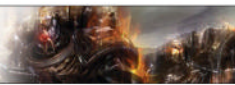
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“I love the new look. Always nice to have a freshen up once in a while”

new look on the inside yet keep the same logo that you've had for the last 10 years? Still looks like the same tired mag on the outside!

SFX Why mess with a classic?

🐟 **SharkOfLogo, Twitter** Just finished reading issue 265, love the new look inside, glad you kept the same logo, brilliant stuff.

🐟 **Donnako1, Twitter** Is the visible “f” & hidden “x” a feature of the regeneration or just a one-off? #curious

🐟 **NobbyNobody, Twitter** The new look is like a homage to vintage *Reader's Digest* but I like it!

SFX How very dare you?!

🐟 **Trevorbaxendale, Twitter** Love a cover photo that's so sharp you can cut your eyes just looking at it. Nice one.

🐟 **WhoOrDie, Twitter** How Pertwee does Capaldi look on this month's @SFXmagazine?

SFX But does he know Venusian karate?

🐟 **Sourdust, Twitter** “Capaldi Coleman Moffat” sounds like the most badass firm of solicitors in the universe.



Fear The Walking Dead – but not on normal telly.

Look out for the next SFX Hot Topic at bit.ly/SFXHotTopic



#RIP WES CRAVEN

🐟 **Pete Gillespie, email** Wes Craven made so many staggering contributions to horror, and shook up this genre so many times, few words will do him justice.

The “video shop”, that treasure trove of illicit covers and taglines, with its blood-splattered imagery and myriad titles, was a shrine to my younger self. If I'm honest, my mum gave me a slap if I even suggested half the films I so craved, but still I longed to know what eyes the hills had, or what fate befell anyone living in left-sided houses.

Having dreamt about sampling these forbidden cinematic fruits it was obvious which one came first... 1, 2 Freddy's coming for you!

A *Nightmare On Elm Street* brought us Freddy Krueger, truly my first “hero”. The hat, the jumper and oh, those fingernails. Terrifying in the shadows, though he would soon be a pin-up boy, Wes Craven's demonic child-killer was breaking down fourth walls and setting up *Scream* decades before that series broke new ground itself.

Funny, scary, satirical and confrontational, Wes Craven made great films that challenged the establishment, the predictable, and scared the crap out of millions.

SFX For me Craven's best films were his early ones – love *The Last House On The Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes* and the first *Nightmare On Elm Street*. TV movie *Chiller* wasn't bad either. Thanks for the scares, Wes.

#MULTIPLE UNIVERSES

🐟 **Matt Hankinson, email** I am a humble man. I work, I rest, I play. When I rest I like nothing more than watching films and TV, and reading your splendid magazine.

Now this is where it becomes tricky. Despite my many hours of various SF viewing, I am yet to invent a money-printing machine, grow a money tree, or even crap out a £20 note. So why oh why are all the great new programmes like *Daredevil*, *Fear The Walking Dead* etc on all these pay-your-way channels. Netflix, Amazon and now even BT are airing these shows, but I simply cannot keep forking out for all these add ons. For the love of Thor please stop it and put these programmes in one, simple place, like on my telly.

SFX As sport fans have realised for years, the days of cheap, simple access to all you want to watch are long gone. On the plus side, the vast quantity of channels and media means we have more sci-fi to watch than ever before. →



A selection of the pages you perused last month!



Greyness and blackness – pretty much Josh Trank's film.

#MORE FOUR

🔗 **Cameron Garner, email** What a pile of bollocks *Fantastic Four* is. How has that happened? They had two films to work out what works and what doesn't and they seem to have looked at the "doesn't" file, and thought "let's try and rectify those". It's soulless and joyless. I understand an earnest film but don't base it on a comic book that has larger-than-life characters. Hell, if they wanted to do a serious and bleak take they should have chosen the Reed goes bad era.

You can play a drinking game while watching the film though – have a drink every time someone sits behind a computer. Guaranteed to get pissed! Only plus side to that film.

SFX *That has to be one of the best and most succinct first lines of a letter I've ever read.*

#HAVING A LAUGH

🔗 **Mike Garner, email** Where's the love for *Yonderland*? A show that proves once and for all that the UK knows how to do comedy. It's funny on a lot of different levels. The puppets, especially the red devils, are the stars. It's awesome, so where's the love?



Yonderland: devilishly funny.

Where's the news of a third season or an insight into the thinking behind the show?

SFX *Did you see our celebration of the show in Viewscreen in SFX 266? No shortage of love for Yonderland here...*

#STAR TREK: THE NEXT NEXT GENERATION

🔗 **Rob Graham, email** Could *Star Trek* ever return to TV? While a TV series with the movie cast isn't likely to happen, it could perhaps come back in a new century with a new Enterprise and crew, as it did with *The Next Generation*. *Star Trek* did the whole shared universe thing in the '90s with various spin offs and movies all set in the same continuity. I can't help feeling that Hollywood is missing something by not creating a new shared *Star Trek* universe.

SFX *We're with you. Hollywood, make it so!*

#WE ALSO HEARD FROM

🔗 **Daniel O'Mahony, email** I was disappointed to pick up your latest issue and find that there was no review of *Hard To Be A God*, Alexei German's astonishing adaptation of the Strugatski brothers' classic science fiction novel, which was released to

“Don't base it on a comic with larger-than-life characters”

cinemas on 7 August. What was especially galling was that of four pages of cinema reviews, a whole two-and-a-half were dedicated to the only very marginally-SF *The Man From UNCLE* and *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation*.

SFX *Well, we've traditionally covered James Bond and they're not a million miles away from those. But you'll be glad to see we got round to reviewing Hard To Be A God on DVD last issue, albeit giving it just two stars.*

🔗 **Robert Macdonald, email** In the Viewscreen review of *Penny Dreadful* Dorian's relationship with a transsexual was mentioned. I feel it appropriate to point out that transsexuals usually have issues with the body they were born in. I believe the character Dorian had a relationship with before offing him was a transvestite or a "drag queen", in modern-day parlance.

🔗 **James Kinsley, email** Dave Golder's review of *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* suggests that the marvellous adaptation of that masterpiece failed by being too reliant on previous knowledge of the book, the argument being that was just too unfriendly to the casual viewer. Anecdotally, I have to disagree. My wife ticks none of those boxes, and yet was a huge fan of *Strange & Norrell*.

SFX *If only there'd been another four million viewers like your wife then the Beeb might have been happy!*

🔗 **Harold Okafor-Withers, email** The red band trailer for *Deadpool* makes this film look awesome. Was pissing myself the whole way through, and is that not the best damned cinematic version of Colossus we've seen yet?

SFX *Not so keen myself! Reynolds seems smug and supercilious, tone looks nasty and facetious.*



Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

➔ Jonathan Hodgson sent us a photo of his promotional standees from Ralph Bakshi's 1978 *Lord Of The Rings*. "I was starting work at a school in 1995 when I saw a load of posters and things relating to various books from some old cupboards being taken out to the skip. These were the most fascinating items!"



ADAM CARTER OF VECTIS SAYS:

"You would be amazed at the number of stories I have heard about schools disposing of items of worth, ranging from film memorabilia to literature.

"The standees are very rare, but that does not transform to high value, unfortunately. However, you do have the two main characters, Frodo Baggins and Gandalf, so I would estimate these at £20-30 as a pair. Interestingly, Bakshi auctioned off many animation cels from the film around the time Peter Jackson released his trilogy, so if you have any of these keep hold of them for the 40th anniversary in 2018."

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo of your item with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@futurenet.com, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

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BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

Jack Burton returns in the Rock-starring remake of John Carpenter's cult classic movie

Illustration by Paul Garner

Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING MOVIES AND TV

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

LISTEN UP DWAYNE, OUR READERS HAVE SOME IDEAS FOR YOUR ADVENTURES IN LITTLE CHINA

MAKE GRACIE THE HERO

1 Jack Burton's uniquely inept brand of heroics is what makes him such a great character. **Torsten Scheib** doesn't want to see that change in the sequel. "I'd love to see [Dwayne Johnson] being a loser. That's what Russell was in the original, that's what made the movie so funny. Why not give it a boost and turn the supporting actress into the lead? Margot Robbie would make a kick-ass modernised version of Gracie Law."

BRING BACK KURT RUSSELL

2 Fab The Rock may be, but he's no Jack Burton according to **Gary Mancini**: "Kurt Russell as Jack Burton. Old, cranky, but still deluding himself as the hero he believes himself to be. The Rock can be his new sidekick, but only Kurt can play Jack Burton."

DO SOMETHING NEW

3 Shockingly, not everyone likes *BTILC*. Case in point: **Andy P Meakin**, who wants to see a new take on the subject. "As

someone who can't understand the people who refer to the original as a 'classic', I'm just hoping for some light entertainment without any attempts to make it feel like the '80s film. Do something new with the idea."

NODS TO HONG KONG CINEMA

4 "BTILC was a way of porting Hong Kong action cinema over to the Western world; let's have scads of subtle homages to those originals with a comical twist!" says **Nick Effingham**. "Have Wang destroy the dice while gaming (à la God of Gamblers) only to be told that the result doesn't count. Have them kick an undead character in the leg and have them hop for a scene..."

DON'T DO IT

5 Your biggest wish by far was, er, for the remake not to happen at all. "Tell me that somehow I've been warped into a nightmarish reality where remakes are the Big Thing! So I can yell GET ME OUT OF THIS PLACE!" says **Gary A Valenzuela**.

And that's not all they want...

→ **Pete Gillespie** Massive wicker hats all round.
→ **Artimus Drawn** Mullets. Mullets and cowboy boots.
→ **Dennis Eikenkötter** He should wear that shirt.
→ **Stacy Kane** Plenty of practical effects.
→ **Rachael Brenner** Retain the tongue-in-cheek tone of the original. And John Carpenter has to record the theme song.
→ **Britpic** Dolph Lundgren.
→ **Dave Low** Martial arts stars in the supporting cast. Donnie Yen would make an amazing David Lo Pan. And the chap from *The Raid* could be Wang Chi.
→ **Gary Pratt** Can The Rock convince as an inept action hero? If

he can bring something new to the character of Jack Burton then the film will be worth a watch, if not then we would be better off sticking with the original film.
→ **Robáird Mac An TSaoir** I want to see Kurt Russell. The Rock is great, but Russell is o! Jack Burton.
→ **Michel Loutchaninoff** It's a perfect movie, why would you want to remake it? God forbid they greenlight something original!
→ **Lee Maby** I wish this remake wasn't happening. The movie was perfect for the '80s and will not work now.
→ **Michael A Bartholomeau** Dwayne Johnson would be better suited to use his talents on a book series that has not as yet been

exploited. For instance he might consider the Doc Savage series, it would be a perfect vehicle for him.
→ **Shaun Watson** Remaster and re-release the original.
→ **Rick Reny** Jack Burton's character is essential, he makes the movie. The Rock is great but he's not believable as a bumbling everyman, and if he's playing an original character then that's even worse. Only solution would be to bring in Kurt to have Jack involved in the storyline and have The Rock take a co-starring role, but we know that's not happening so what's the point again?
→ **Andy Hall** The Rock in an action movie, SOLD.
→ **Jackson** Make it in China.



COMING SOON DOCTOR STRANGE AND 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

Benedict Cumberbatch's sorcerer supreme is up next month (finally) and after that Bryan Singer adapts a Jules Verne classic.

See bit.ly/SFXwishlist for details.

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DARKNESS OF THE FAR FUTURE

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First Contact

Dec 2015

YOUR DREAM CAST

DAVID LO PAN

Donnie Yen

GRACIE LAW

Margot Robbie

JACK'S SIDEKICK

The Rock

JACK BURTON

Kurt Russell

WANG CHI

Iko Uwais



LIFE AFTER LIFE

by Kate Atkinson, 2013

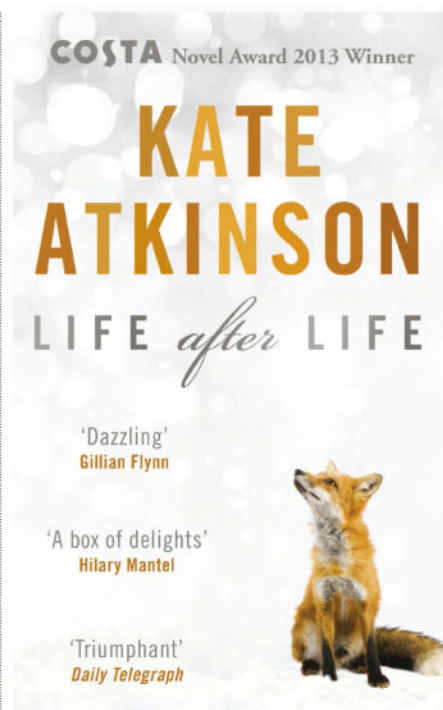
Sophia McDougall goes back in time with an award-winning novel



A young woman walks into an Austrian cafe, where a veteran of the Great War and leader of a rising political party is eating cake. “Führer, fur sie,” she greets him – before shooting Hitler in the heart. It’s 1930.

Kate Atkinson’s novels have nudged the margins of SFF before. Ruby, narrator and heroine of *Behind The Scenes At The Museum*, is conscious for her own conception and displays an impossible omniscience about her family’s history. Isobel, of *Human Croquet*, keeps slipping into the past, and even the characters of the Jackson Brodie novels occasionally seem gifted with mild telepathy. But these touches of the fantastic always remained on the level of atmospheric conceit rather than penetrating into the narrative itself.

In *Life After Life*, with that bullet to Hitler’s heart, Atkinson boldly and emphatically goes there. Any doubts that we’re looking at real time travel vanish as her heroine, Ursula, born over and over again on an endlessly repeating winter day in 1910, begins to remember her past lives and shape her choices accordingly, striving like *Quantum Leap*’s Sam Beckett “to set right what once went wrong”. The result is a palimpsest of personal and global alternate histories, overwriting each other through an individual life. It is a great compliment to SFF that Atkinson’s contribution to it is her masterpiece; exploring and extending the capacities of the genre with the confidence of a writer at the height of her powers. *Life After Life* rises to meet the limitlessness of its premise, departing from reality only in order to witness it more fully. Atkinson’s rather surprising answer to the question of what the



novel is “really about” is, in her author’s note “being English”, and Ursula does live through some of England’s most cherished modern mythology about itself, from the sunny daydream of tea on the pre-1914 lawn to the heroism and heartbreak of the Blitz, as well as the snobbery and hypocrisy, misogyny and violence that exist alongside them.

But *Life After Life* encompasses so much more than Englishness. “We are all intrigued by ‘What If’ scenarios,” Atkinson writes,

recounting how the novel evolved from the idea of Hitler being kidnapped as a baby by a time traveller. But the most compelling “what if”’s contain perhaps equal measures of excitement and horror. Ursula has an infinitude of chances to “get it right” – and no escape from the limitlessness of all that can go wrong. Sometimes this becomes darkly comic: the child Ursula dies so frequently from Spanish Flu that even the narrative seems exasperated (“Darkness, and so on”) and Ursula is driven to outlandish lengths to save her own life, like a frustrated gamer trying to do a difficult level.

Atkinson’s trademark playfulness brings necessary light to a vision that is ultimately tragic, even terrifying. *Life After Life* is at once a lament for the waste of the 20th century and a study of the incalculable weight of tiny decisions; the speed and ease with which a life can be ruined. This is perhaps most glaring during the Blitz section – life or death hanging on an impulsive run after a dog, on whether or not to buy a particular dress – but it was the life dominated by the consequences of a trauma in Ursula’s teenage years that I found most heartbreaking. Ursula’s triumphs are in the end almost more poignant than her many deaths: through her fantastic ability always to try again, to do better, the novel shines a sombre light on time endlessly falling beyond rescue. ●

Sophia McDougall is the author of the Mars Evacuees series and Romanitas trilogy.

Like this? Try these!

THE VIOLENT CENTURY
by LAVIE TIDHAR (2014)
→ Another science fiction examination of the long tragedy of the 20th century. Are superheroes really less believable than the Holocaust?



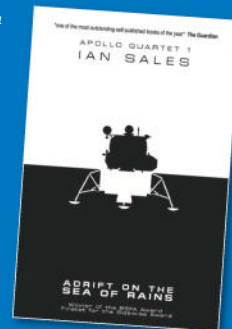
THE SHINING GIRLS
by LAUREN BEUKES (2013)
→ A serial killer of women travels, like Ursula, within his own 20th century lifetime, while in the 1990s, the one girl that survived tries to hunt him down.




NEXT ISSUE

In SFX 268, *Europe In Autumn* author Dave Hutchinson (read our interview on p82) writes about Ian Sales’s *Adrift On The Sea Of Rains* and its sequels.

If you’ve not read these novels before – or want an excuse to go back and have another look – this is your chance to see what a top author thinks of the book.





WAR OF THE WORLDS

COMING IN NOVEMBER

On one terrible night in August 1895, the world changed forever. Grey metal cylinders, launched from Mars, came crashing down in southern England. The next 15 days were marked by courage and despair, hope and shock, defeat and fleeting victory as Queen Victoria's army struggled to contain the terrible alien threat. The war, man against machines from space, was fought without mercy on either side. And the outcome would be decided by the smallest of things...

This book covers the whole of the Anglo-Martian conflict, beginning with a look at the relative strengths and weakness of the two armies, both British and alien, and comparing the different strategies employed. It then takes a detailed look at the actual military struggle, covering all of the major engagements between the tripods and Victoria's army.

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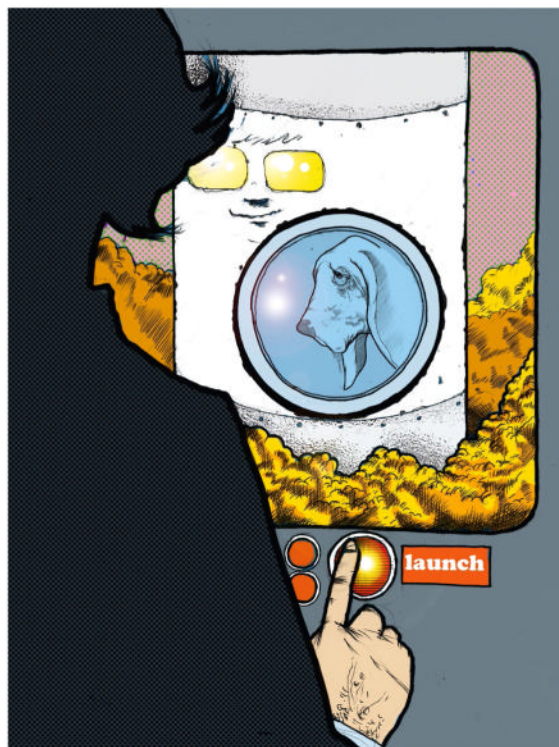
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PUPPY KICKING

David Langford reports on more Hugos controversy



**“PUPPIES ALSO
SEEM TO HATE
WOMEN WHO
WRITE
ACCLAIMED
MILITARY SF”**

→ Illustration by Andy Watt

This year's Hugo Awards at Sasquan, the World SF Convention in Spokane, were *unusual*. Never before had Dramatic Presentation been handed out, or suckered out, by a Dalek. Never before had Best Novel been presented via video from the International Space Station. And never before... but first, some background.

After a troubled summer in SF circles, Sasquan's permanent reek of smoke from raging US wildfires seemed appropriate. In *SFX* 262 I told how “Sad Puppies” and “Rabid Puppies” factions gamed the Hugo nominations to swamp the final ballot with their choices, and guessed there'd be widespread voting for No Award. Since then, record numbers had paid \$40 for Hugo voting rights. No one knew whether the surge was pro- or anti-Puppy.

Anti, it turned out. “No Award” was announced five more times in one evening – for Novella, Short Story, Related Work (nonfiction) and both Professional Editor categories. These were the Hugo slots entirely filled by Puppy nominees. Elsewhere, from the fan awards to Best Novel (Cixin Lui's *The Three-Body Problem*), Puppies were generally smacked with the rolled-up newspaper of placing below No Award. The only winner from the slates, for Best Dramatic Presentation, was *Guardians Of The Galaxy* – which voters clearly reckoned was worthy on its own merits.

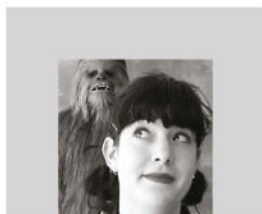
Was this cruel? It was hard for Pup nominees to sit through cheers of relief at each “No Award” (though they could have refused the tainted nomination, as some principled folk did). Very few Puppy works had award-winning quality, and many were downright awful. The Sad slate was mostly cronyism, with Sad leader Brad Torgersen listing his buddies. The Rabid slate added naked self-promotion: Theodore “Vox Day” Beale, the Arch-Rabid, unashamedly stuffed the ballot with work from his own small press Castalia House.

That apart, what are the Puppies' aims? The official ideology varies, with goalposts not so much motorised as fitted with faster-than-light drive. Essentially, Puppies Want Hugos and have been unfairly deprived of them by a tiny, evil cabal of Social Justice Warriors (SJWs) who for many years have controlled the award – no actual evidence here, but THEY KNOW IT – and prevented nomination of Puppy-favoured SF.

What Puppies like includes media tie-in SF, mysteriously omitted from their slates, and military SF... unless it's by successful military-SF author John Scalzi, who understatedly refers to Beale as RSHD (Racist Sexist Homophobic Dipshit) and is Puppy Public Enemy #1. What Puppies hate also seems to include women who write acclaimed military SF. Especially Ann Leckie, whose *Ancillary Justice* won the 2014 Hugo but is BAD because it's told from the viewpoint of an embodied AI who doesn't understand gender and calls everyone “she”. This is just too yucky, and proves that Leckie's Hugo victory resulted from the SJW conspiracy. Likewise, presumably, her wins of the Arthur C Clarke, BSFA, Locus and Nebula awards – pretty much a clean sweep of the top SF honours.

The Worldcon business meeting passed some measures against ballot-stuffing, but these need ratification in 2016 to take effect in 2017. Expect another year of shenanigans, with those who dislike slate voting again being abused as SJWs and Puppy-Kickers. What jolly fun! ●

David Langford is so glad to be out of the Hugo running.



GO NUTS!

Bonnie Burton says it's time for a Squirrel Girl movie



**“A FEMALE
SUPERHERO
WHO USES TINY
WILDLIFE IS
EXACTLY THE
KIND WE NEED”**

→ Illustration by Maria Colino

Superheroes have been able to control everything from the weather to gravity to help them battle criminals. Some of them have mutant powers like the X-Men, and others use really cool outfits and gadgets to fight bad guys. But I can't help but get excited when superheroes use the power to communicate with unusual allies to help them in their quest for justice.

When I was just a wee lass, I used to pretend I could telepathically communicate with any animals around me. I would stare into the eyes of our family cat and meow until I was convinced her rolling onto her back was my will. I'd sit in front of my grandfather's cows and have long silent conversations with them – with my mind, of course. And if I caught the eye of a busy chipmunk roaming around our front porch, I'd try to mind meld with the critter.

So when I first discovered Marvel's Squirrel Girl in the early '90s, I knew I'd found a long-lost superhero sister. Created by Will Murray and Steve Ditko, Squirrel Girl (aka Doreen Green) first appeared in *Marvel Super-Heroes Vol 2*, #8. Even as a teen, Squirrel Girl sets her sights high in the superhero world. She first ambushes Iron Man in a forest to impress him with her rodent communication powers to convince him to let her be his new sidekick. He's unimpressed until Doctor Doom captures him and she rescues him with a horde of squirrels.

I know this sounds crazy to anyone who prefers their superheroes dark, broody and gritty. But I for one am getting tired of seeing the same type of movie superheroes over and over again. How many Spider-Man and Batman reboots do we need? Why should I just settle for Black Widow in the Avengers when I can have a movie dedicated to an unusual female superhero we haven't seen in the movies before? And if Ant-Man can win over picky fans with a quirky superpower to control ants, why can't Squirrel Girl?

She deserves her own movie. She has strange superpowers and a crazy backstory. She's connected to so many top superheroes that just the cameos would be worth the ticket price alone. She kicks Deadpool out of the Great Lakes Avengers. Luke Cage and Jessica Jones hire her as a nanny. She's romantically linked to Wolverine. And along with her squirrel army, she's defeated some of the most powerful villains in Marvel's history, including Doctor Doom and MODOK. She even befriends Galactus and talks him out of destroying the Earth.

It would make for an interesting casting decision. Not every actress can make having a three-foot tail and sizeable buckteeth look sexy. Then there's the retractable “knuckle spikes” to help with climbing and fighting, and “speaking” squirrel, which can't be the easiest language to learn.

So how can you not want to see that all happen in a feature film or TV series? The time is ripe for female superheroes on screen. We're getting a new Wonder Woman movie soon. Jessica Jones has her own TV series. Even Xena the Warrior Princess is getting a TV reboot. So why not let Squirrel Girl have a go at fighting the bad guys somewhere other than just the comics?

An underestimated female superhero who uses tiny wildlife to help her get the job done is exactly the kind of superhero we need in a world full of burly, testosterone-driven, moody men. I've had enough Superman and Batman. I'm starting my Squirrel Girl movie petition now, and you'd all be nuts not to sign it. ●

Bonnie is thrilled that James Gunn has expressed an interest in a Squirrel Girl film.



Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

NO MORE NIGHTMARES

➤ August saw the passing of horror legend Wes Craven, aged 76. These days Craven is best known for kick-starting the meta-horror tradition with the *Scream* series in 1996 (although 1994's *New Nightmare* was a precursor), accused of hamstringing horror in the '90s because of its copycats, but actually the start of a new era – a shock to the system which pushed filmmakers away from just rehashing the slashers of the '70s and '80s that Craven had been so instrumental in defining. Craven was an innovator and one of the most important figures in genre filmmaking, perhaps never lauded enough as a political thinker and agent provocateur. *The Last House On The Left* is horrible, grimy and shocking but it was Craven's reaction to Vietnam, based on Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* and was born of his desire to present violence and exploitation as unromantic and real. *The Hills Have Eyes* shows an us/them dialogue through opposing “nuclear” families still relevant in this era of terrorism. And *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, as well as being brilliantly scary is genre-defining in its blurring of reality and fiction (without *Nightmare* would there have been *Ringu*?). He drove the genre, invented and then took it apart and rebuilt it. Sweet dreams then, Mr Craven, and thanks for all the scares.

BUZZ KILL

➤ Back when *Snakes On A Plane/Train* was the thing, I had this idea for a low-budget Brit spin off called *Wasp In A Taxi* – tense, traumatising, short, it would have been great! Sadly I missed the boat (*Ferrets On A Ferry* never set sail either...). Now in the era of *Sharknado* everything has to be bigger (indeed, spoof doc *Sharknado: Heart Of Sharkness*, out October, has taken things to new levels of meta). Introducing *Stung*, then, out October – a funny, gross comedy where party guests are under attack by a multitude of malignant mutant stingers. This is basic loser fantasy – unremarkable dude mans up and saves gorgeous girl (and Lance Henriksen) from black and yellow menace – though its lack of cynicism and brilliant final “sting” means it flies above the whirlwind of mutant fish.

Giant wasps, scary ghosts and a brace of home-made Halloween costumes



An icon born in Wes Craven's *A Nightmare On Elm Street*.



Party guests get *Stung* and it's not by the drinks prices.



We Are Still Here – and not very attractive either.

HOUSE OF PAIN

➤ DVD of the month goes to grungy US indie *We Are Still Here* – a slow-burn creepy ghost story that turns into a ridiculous out-'n'-out gorefest before your poked-out eyes! Special mention goes to larger than life Larry Fessenden who plays the stoner friend of a bereaved older couple whose son has died in tragic circumstances. What begins as a period haunted-houser in the footsteps of *House Of The Devil* and *The Innkeepers* transforms into a Fulci-style freak out complete with spewing blood. The acting's a bit hokey but there's a similar dark humour to *Cheap Thrills* and *Starry Eyes*, which share a producer in Travis Stevens. Stevens seems to be the one to watch here – he's currently co-producing *XX*, that female-only anthology movie with Karyn Kusama, Jennifer Lynch and Mary Harron I mentioned a while back. More on this when I have it.

DRESS TO KILL

➤ Halloween is upon us and with it costume anxiety. Are you tired of boring old 20th century horror outfits? Try my cutting-edge home-made ideas for killer cossies and you'll be the star of the night! For him: Hector from *Timecrimes*. How: big overcoat, pink bandages on the head, holes cut for eyes and nose, pair of scissors as prop. For her: The Woman from *The Woman*. How: wear cheap crop top and skirt you don't mind getting dirty. Get really, really dirty. Wear hair long and fringe short. Eat a lot of liquorice. ●

Dreadful things to watch

➔ The stars are coming out (straight to DVD) for two new horrors heading your way. William Shatner is our horror host for Chrimbo anthology *A Christmas Horror Story* (out 9 Nov), and Nicolas Cage will play an English professor with a missing son in Halloween-set chiller *Pay The Ghost*, out 26 October. Will they shine for you?





FREESPEAK

WHERE WRITERS AND OPINIONS COLLIDE

Author **Alison Littlewood** has no time for genre snobbery

Author of more than 50 novels meets the President.



Have we done with genre snobbery yet? I'd love to think so. After all, I'm writing this in the week when Stephen King received the National Medal of Arts from Barack Obama. And don't we all roll our eyes when we hear something like, "That can't be sci-fi/fantasy/horror. It's good!"

Well, no, of course we're not done. (I just enjoy these flights of whimsy now and then.) Jonathan Jones can still think it's okay to dismiss Terry Pratchett in *The Guardian*, without troubling to read any of his books. And there's plenty of snobbery *within* genre fiction. Some are snuffy about monsters: zombies, vampires, werewolves... ugh! But it is possible to breathe new life into old tropes. Look at *The Girl With All The Gifts* by MR Carey, or *Let The Right One In* by John Ajvide Lindqvist.

The thing is, we tend to forget that writing should be fun. I've been guilty of this. Sometimes the words won't flow, but I'd still rather wrestle with them than do anything else, because hell, this is what I love. If I'm not enjoying myself, I deserve a damn good arse kicking. I've recently been

immersed in monsters. I've written about Satan (hey, got to start somewhere), and indeed zombies. I had a blast; I'm feeling refreshed.

As a reader, I love it when I can feel the fun the author is having, burning off the page. *Westlake Soul* by Rio Youers springs to mind. Or Tim Lebbon's *The Silence*. *The Haunted Book* by Jeremy Dyson, and the *Lucifer Box* novels by Mark Gatiss. I have no idea if the authors actually enjoyed writing them, but I know what impression I got, and I really want to think they were grinning as they typed.

I'm not saying that writing shouldn't have serious intent. Of course it should. It's a means of trying to get to grips with the world, to comment upon it, to make us empathise with people we can never be. But give me a novel, not a sermon. I want to be entertained, to forget that time is passing. Reading and writing should be celebrated for what they are – a joy – rather than have the life crushed out of them and risk becoming as dry – and dead – as dust. ☛

Alison's latest novel, A Cold Silence, is out now.
www.alisonlittlewood.co.uk

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Future Publishing Ltd Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA
Email sfx@futurenet.com Web www.gamesradar.com/sfx

EDITORIAL

Editor Richard Edwards, richard.edwards@futurenet.com
Art Editor Jonathan Coates, jonathan.coates@futurenet.com
Deputy Art Editor Catherine Kirkpatrick, catherine.kirkpatrick@futurenet.com
Production Editor Russell Lewin, russell.lewin@futurenet.com
Features Editor Nick Setchfield, nick.setchfield@futurenet.com
Home Entertainment Editor (Reviews) Ian Berriman, ian.berriman@futurenet.com
Community Editor (News) Jordan Farley, jordan.farley@futurenet.com
US Editor (East Coast) Tara Bennett, usaeast@sfx.co.uk
US Editor (West Coast) Joseph McCabe, usawest@sfx.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Sam Ashurst, Louise Blain, Saxon Bullock, Bonnie Burton, Paul Cemmick, Nick Chen, Nic Clarke, Maria Colino, Sarah Dobbs, Penny Dreadful, Rhian Drinkwater, Edwin Evans-Thirlwell, Paul Garner, Matt Sakurao-Gilman, Dave Golder, Michaela Gray, Tom Hawker, Stephen Jewell, Paul Kirkley, David Langford, James Leighton-Burns, Miriam McDonald, Sophia McDougall, Jayne Nelson, Steve O'Brien, Oliver Pfeiffer, Will Salmon, Neil Smith, Tom Stone, Alex Thomas, Andy Watt, David West, James White, Jonathan Wright

FILM GROUP, LONDON

Editor (Total Film) Jane Crowther
Operations Editor Alex Cox, alex.cox@futurenet.com
Art Editor Mike Brennan Deputy Art Editor Megan Davis
Screenings Editor Matthew Leyland News Editor Matt Maytum
Special Editions Editor Rosie Fletcher
Entertainment Editor (GamesRadar+) Lauren O'Callaghan

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ADVERTISING

Account Director Adrian Hill, 01225 442244, adrian.hill@futurenet.com
Advertising Manager Michael Pyatt, michael.pyatt@futurenet.com
Advertising Director Andrew Church, andrew.church@futurenet.com
Commercial Sales Director Clare Dove, clare.dove@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Group Marketing Manager Laura Driffield, laura.driffield@futurenet.com
Marketing Manager Kristianne Stanton, kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com
Marketing Executive Emma Clapp, emma.clapp@futurenet.com

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller Vivienne Calvert, vivienne.calvert@futurenet.com
Production Manager Mark Constance, mark.constance@futurenet.com
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons on behalf of Future
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT Tel 020 7429 4000
Overseas distribution by Seymour International

CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager Michelle Brock, 020 7429 3683,
michelle.brock@seymour.co.uk

LICENSING

International Director Regina Erak, regina.erak@futurenet.com
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244 Fax +44 (0)1225 732275

THE SENIOR PARTNERS

Group Editor-In-Chief Dave Bradley Group Art Director Graham Dalzell
Head of Content & Marketing, Film, Music and Games Declan Gough
President, Future US Charlie Speight Content & Marketing Director Nial Ferguson

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Phone our UK hotline on 0844 848 2852 International +44 (0)1604 251 045
Online enquiries www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
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Biofield Zillah Byng-Thorne
Non-executive chairman Peter Allen
Chief financial officer Penny Larkin-Brand
Tel +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244 (Bath)

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THERE WILL



As the Hunger Games franchise reaches its climax, Nick Setchfield discovers how it's going out with a bang

BE BLOOD



This is the war movie," declares Francis Lawrence, emphatically. "This is Katniss's revenge movie." Lawrence is now a cinematic combat veteran. His tour of duty? Directing no fewer than three consecutive films in the *Hunger Games* saga, a juggernaut franchise that has, to date, hauled in more than \$2.2 billion at the global box office. He may have spent the last three and a half years on the dystopian frontline but there's no trace of shellshock when *SFX* catches up with him in Los Angeles. Then again it's hard to have shellshock in the gilded environs of the Beverly Hills Four Seasons. We're in the home of the Hollywood power brunch to talk *Mockingjay Part 2*, the film that caps the chronicles of the Girl on Fire and her struggle against the oppressive regime of the Capitol.

Everyone's calling it the end of an era, naturally. But Lawrence is feeling more pragmatic than reflective today. "I'm happy to get it done," he shares, affably. "A little sad that it's going to be over. I have a few more weeks. We're still working on effects shots and colour and sound but the cut's locked."

Lit by the blaze and rage of war, the final film in the series concludes the adaptation of Suzanne Collins's trilogy-wrapping novel, split into two movies. "I don't know how to do this book as a whole in one movie," Lawrence argues. "I just don't think you can. You'd literally have to excise one whole portion of the book."

So how do the two halves fit together? "It's not quite a seamless join," the helmer reveals. "If we were just to slam the two movies together it would feel like something was missing – not anything substantial but a transitional piece. When you see the movie you'll see that we jump right in. This one is much more Katniss-centric and it's much more faithful to the book. We really made the book."

Mockingjay Part 2 sees the nation of Panem finally tipped into bloody revolution. Teamed with a guilt-haunted Gale (Liam Hemsworth) and an unstable Peeta (Josh Hutcherson), bow-bothering insurrectionary Katniss Everdeen – Jennifer Lawrence, cementing her status as the alpha female star of planet Earth – leads a desperate mission into the very heart of President Snow's tyranny. Expect ingeniously wicked death traps, hard moral choices and some psychologically fraught storytelling.

OUT IN THE OPEN

"Visually it's different because it's a very different story," shares Lawrence. "The last one takes place underground and Katniss is sidelined. There's a lot less action and it's dark and claustrophobic. This one's very different. Very quickly we're out of District 13 and in District 2. And we spend a lot of time in the Capitol. That gives a different foundation for visual choices that opens the film up in a much bigger way. It's much more epic."

"I think it's also much more similar tonally to the first two movies. The war in this movie is essentially an arena. There are definitely shared themes throughout the entire series. This is the movie where all of the themes coalesce. The last one was about propaganda and the media and the manipulation of imagery. Those aspects and the consequences of war and violence all come together here." →

“When you see the movie you’ll see that we jump right in”

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“HE WANTS TO FINISH THIS WAR”



LIAM HEMSWORTH
GALE HAWTHORNE

Gale's more of an active participant in this movie. Was that engaging for you as an actor?

→ Yeah, absolutely. For so long Gale's been held back and he's been watching it from the sidelines. Now he's finally able to be a part of the action and do something about it. And that's exactly what he wants to do. He's angry and emotional and he wants to finish this war.

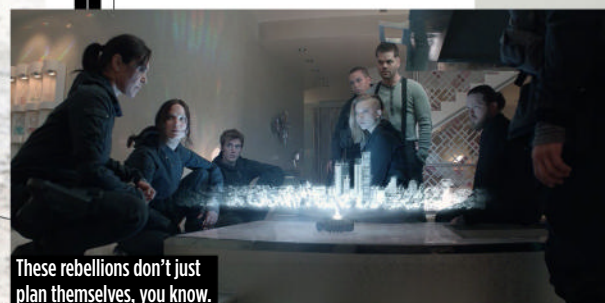
How did it feel knowing this was the last movie?

→ We were initially sad to say goodbye to these stories and these characters. We knew we didn't have another film to come back to, which for the last few years we have – we'd always had that next one and we were excited to come back and shoot together. We still hang out, just as much. We have group texts. Any time we're in the same place together, the same city, we'll hang out.

Did you keep a souvenir from the movies?

→ I stole a ton of underwear. I literally got to the point where I came in one day and there was no underwear. I was like "Where's my underwear, guys?" and they were like "You've taken every pair we have!" **Nick Setchfield**

The team-building away days were getting more intense.



These rebellions don't just plan themselves, you know.



REBEL REBEL

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
hangs up the bow

Katniss has always been a reluctant participant. Now she's more proactive...

→ *Mockingjay 2* is kind of the first time that Katniss takes on this role of the Mockingjay beyond the reason of she wanted to save her sister and outside of saving her own skin. She now sees that it's affecting the future. If I were to describe her with one word - which I didn't have to because you didn't ask me to - I think that she gets to a point where she's really just numb, because she really doesn't care if she lives or dies. She's focused on making a better future.

This film finally resolves the love triangle. What did that element add to the story for you?

→ I went back and forth with that, because it was something that kind of annoyed me at the beginning. But these children are growing up in a time when even just having a crush, or even having a first kiss, can't be done because they have to focus on survival. They have to focus on a war. It's so different from our reality, where we grow up. Fortunately in this part of the world, you can have a crush, and you can go in the woods, and you can kiss, and you can focus on boys... I think it's more of an example of how sad and how difficult this particular time is for them, when they can't even have that luxury of a first kiss.

What was the highlight of these four films for you?

→ The highlight was meeting my two best friends.

Do you have plans to keep in touch with Josh and Liam?

→ It's like, "Do you guys have an annual reunion?" No, we just text each other every day and see each other weekly! We don't overthink it.

Did you keep a souvenir from the movies?

→ I kept some *Mockingjay* pins and some rehearsal bows and my *Catching Fire* bow.

Nick Setchfield

"IT'S HEAVY MATERIAL..."



JOSH HUTCHERSON
PEETA MELLARK

Everyone talks about how physically gruelling these movies are. But are there moments which are psychologically gruelling too?

→ I had to think about being tortured, and imagine what that's like, which is not fun to even imagine, let alone have happen to you. But it's not like I held onto it. It's heavy material but at the same time I'm with these guys so I can't be serious when they say cut.

What's your most memorable fan encounter?

→ I had someone in Spain who came up to me – I don't speak very much Spanish, and she didn't speak very much English – and she was trying to explain to me something about *The Hunger Games*. She said "Look!" She pulled up [her top]... I was like "Oh my god!" Real Or Not Real was tattooed on either side. I was like oh boy, I applaud you for commitment. However I'm happy it's not my face.

Did you keep a souvenir from the movies?

→ I kept a little locket I gave to Katniss. **Nick Setchfield**

“My goal was to focus on the emotional impact, the emotional consequences”

Violence is the key word. Collins' novel is a famously brutal kiss-off to the world she created, a bloodbath unafraid to take its readers, let alone its characters, to the edge of trauma. Was Lawrence concerned about bringing that kind of carnage to the screen? Or was he determined not to flinch?

“I was both concerned and determined not to flinch,” he admits to *SFX*. “One of the big themes of this story is violence – the effects of violence and the consequences of it. These books are targeted at teenagers. Part of the reason they appealed is that Suzanne didn't flinch. And luckily people have embraced it. You also don't want to flinch. But you don't want to get an R rating and alienate all the teenagers that the books are meant for. My goal was not to focus on the carnage, on the bloodbath aspect of it, but on the emotional impact, the emotional consequences. We did the things that are in the book. It needs to have impact. That's where you don't want to flinch. You just don't need to fetishise the blood and the carnage and the gore.”

So he hasn't gone full Tarantino, then? “No, definitely not!”

“We've been faithful from the beginning and we're never going to stop being faithful,” insists Nina Jacobson, the powerhouse producer behind the franchise. “It is the power of the series that Suzanne doesn't pull



“Well the sat-nav says we've reached our destination...”

her punches at the end. You may not get everything you wanted... As a reader you're taken on a very emotional journey yet it feels deeply satisfying and complete as a story because of the choices she's made. We were never going to pussyfoot around the subject matter, just as we haven't from the beginning. That was always the point of doing them – to follow her lead.”

LET IT SNOW

Crucially *Mockingjay Part 2* brings us the final confrontation between Katniss and Donald Sutherland's silky despot Snow. It's here that the filmmakers took licence to go beyond Suzanne Collins' words.

“The book has a scene where they get together,” says Lawrence. “Of course we have that scene in the movie. But there was some development needed for the Snow character. So there are some scenes in the movie – scenes that I quite like, actually – that are not in the book. They're the imagined scenes happening behind the scenes.”

GO KATNISS!

Five moments that defined the Girl on Fire



KATNISS VOLUNTEERS AS TRIBUTE – THE HUNGER GAMES

→ If there's one scene in the series which defines Katniss's brave and sacrificing nature, this would be it. Plus, it'd be a real short story if Katniss hadn't volunteered to take her little sister Prim's place in the Games, and generated a thousand internet memes while she was at it. *SFX* hereby raises its hand in the three-fingered salute.



KATNISS ALMOST EATS SOME BERRIES – THE HUNGER GAMES

→ Admittedly this sounds more like an advert for some kind of diet fad rather than a defining moment, but when Katniss and Peeta are the only two left standing at the end of the original Games, her decision to die by deadly berry rather than let the Capitol turn them against each other is the spark which ignites a revolution.



"Just because I'm dressed like a flamingo doesn't mean you shouldn't take my advice."

"I WAS PREPARING TO SAY GOODBYE"



SAM CLAFLIN
FINNICK ODAIR

How does it feel to be coming to the end of your *Hunger Games* experience?

→ I've had time to let it go. The few months of filming for me was quite different compared to Jennifer or Josh or Liam, who had the extra year of filming and were a bit more constant during the last film. I think because of that fact I was kind of preparing myself to say goodbye.

Does having Annie back make Finnick more keen to get involved in the war?

→ Yeah, he's a protector. Every point along the story he's done everything possible to protect not only himself but other people. He wants to make the world a safer place and a better place.

Do you imagine that we'll see any other spin-offs down the line?

→ I definitely feel like there's the potential. The beginning of *The Hunger Games*, for example, I think is an interesting concept. But it just depends what they want to do with it really, it's out of my hands anyway [laughs]. **Matt Maytum**

"It was fun to create the world of Snow as the Capitol crumbles. It really helps in terms of his mindset. I thought a lot about *Downfall* – sitting in the bunker and watching Hitler fall apart. This is a very different version of it, and there's a lot less Snow than that, but we had an opportunity that we got to play around with a little bit. And of course Katniss and her presence becomes a part of that story."

Collins ended her saga on a dark, heart-rending note. Does the movie version embrace that? Or do films have a duty to leave their audience in a happier place when the exit lights come up?

"I'm pretty happy with the way this movie ends," says Lawrence. "Yes, the book has a bleak ending. And we are making the book. But there's a way of landing the movie where the sacrifices that people have made should not be for nothing. And yet those people will forever be changed and damaged because of what's happened. Ideally we're landing in that zone."

The world may be preparing to say farewell to Panem but you suspect Hollywood won't

easily relinquish such a bankable box office brand. There are already rumblings of potential sequels, prequels and universe extensions.

"The truth is that for any of those stories to really happen they would have to come from Suzanne," says Lawrence. "I can't speak for her but I think she's interested in other things right now, which I totally get. It's been a huge chunk of her life. If she wanted to come back to this world and tell more stories I'm sure they'd be great. Personally I think it would be tough to do these stories and not have Katniss. Some movies you can keep going based on the world and people will go and see them. I think people see these movies because of Katniss. Could you just go back to somebody else's games? I don't know. It would take some real thought into what the stories would have to be."

Maybe Katniss Everdeen is the true legacy of these movies. A firebrand whose real revolution was proving that female-led action films could own the arena. As Nina Jacobson tells *SFX*, the *Mockingjay* is an icon whose time has come.

"Many of us have a longing for social change and a notion that the system is broken. This is a character who changes things without setting out to be a hero and I think that resonates with people. A person who acts from her gut and ends up changing the world is something that I think people aspire to." ●

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 opens on 19 November.

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KATNISS HOLDS HANDS WITH THE TRIBUTES – *THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE*

→ When the Quarter Quell tributes are reaped from the pool of victors, Katniss links hands with the other victors in a show of unity. The tide of feeling in the Capitol begins to turn against Snow, and show host Caesar looks like he needs to change his doubtless silk, hair-colour-coordinated briefs.



KATNISS SINGS "THE HANGING TREE" – *THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 1*

→ J-Law's rather lovely, cracked vocal provides the goosebump-inducing soundtrack to the uprising when Katniss sings the forbidden folk song in a rare, reflective moment. As well as inspiring revolt, one listen is also guaranteed to defeat any unwanted earworm known to *SFX*, even Meghan Trainor. Take that, *Les Misérables*!



KATNISS STICKS IT TO THE MAN – *THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 1*

→ An attempt to kill Katniss while she's visiting a hospital backfires when the hospital is destroyed, and Katniss is filmed giving President Snow her rage-fuelled "if we burn, you burn with us" speech that helps motivate the rebels. You might even say she is on fire. Sorry.

Michaela Gray

LICENCE RENEWED

WITH **JAMES BOND** PREPARING
TO TAKE ON AN OLD ENEMY,
JANE CROWTHER OPENS THE
ENTICING FILE ON **SPECTRE**...





1

It's the same bloody

character. He's done 23 movies," says Sam Mendes. "He's been to most places in the world. He's had chases in every possible environment. How do you make it fresh?"

Holed up in his edit suite in London's Soho as he tries to get *SPECTRE* ready for its bow 16 weeks away, Bond's director is musing over the eternal conundrum that is 007. And the challenge facing any director coming on board an established franchise. "In many cases, it's using the same elements, but telling them so you feel you're discovering them again, almost for the first time."

Given that Mendes' own personal favourite Bond (and the first he saw at the cinema) is *Live And Let Die* it's hardly surprising that one of those elements in *SPECTRE*, the scene-setting pre-title sequence, has a knowing nod to *LALD*'s villain, with Bond wearing a skeletal mask during a Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City. "You see the skullface and you're like, 'Oh, it's Baron Samedi!'" nods Mendes enthusiastically. "It's actually quite different, but of course there are echoes there. But part of the joy of Bond is a riffing on the iconography of it, and teasing you with things – I don't know who it was who said that the job of the artist is to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar. That's part of the game you play with Bond. So I was very aware of all the homages that were being paid."

Add that cinematic wink to Bond's fire-spouting Aston Martin DB10, a key scene atop a snowy mountain in Austria that nods to *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, a train journey and en-route fight that evokes *From Russia With Love* and plenty of other homages. And, Mendes promises, Bond might also have a few more quips and a bit more fun than he did in 2012's ultra-serious – but ultra-money-spinning – *Skyfall*. "*Casino Royale* removed pastiche entirely from the franchise – pastiche was almost all it had by the time Pierce [Brosnan] finished. But *Casino Royale* went right back the other direction," Mendes says when thinking back to his first attraction to directing *Skyfall*. "But we all missed and loved the fun of those early mid-'70s Bonds, the early Roger Moores, the later Sean Connerys, where there was a sense of tongue-in-cheek. We didn't have much of that in [*Skyfall*]. There's definitely more mischief at the beginning of this movie. But underpinning it all is still a serious story."

That serious story then: after the events of *Skyfall* (M slain, MI6 destroyed, Bond vengeful), 007 sets off on a rogue mission to uncover the links to sinister criminal organisation SPECTRE (Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and

Extortion). During his investigations he meets Dr Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux), widow Lucia Scarria (Monica Bellucci), hulking henchman Mr Hinx (Dave Bautista) and the villain of the piece, the mysterious Franz Oberhauser (Christoph Waltz). As Bond beds and battles his way round Europe, MI5 and MI6 are under threat from head of the Centre for National Security, Max Denbigh (Andrew Scott), and Moneypenny (Naomie Harris) must fight to save Bond's very way of life. That synopsis offers up another glance back at the Bond legacy with the reintroduction of *SPECTRE*, a staple of Fleming's books and first referenced on-screen in *Dr No*, but absent from the franchise for years due to legal wrangling. *SPECTRE* was co-created by Fleming and Kevin McClory, who retained the rights to the name and concept, which led to the creation of the unofficial Bond film *Never Say Never Again*, under McClory's stewardship.

Producers Michael G Wilson and Barbara Broccoli had wrangled for years to settle the rights with McClory's estate, and finally succeeded in 2013. "I had [*SPECTRE*] in our back pockets," confides Wilson when we catch up with him and Broccoli on-set at Pinewood. "When we saw this script as it unfolded, we came to the conclusion: maybe we should bring *SPECTRE* back. That was a nod towards the tradition in a way. Just like we brought back the Bond characters Moneypenny and Q and M."

But how will this version of *SPECTRE* wreak havoc on the world when back in the old days they were connected to the Gestapo, the Mafia, Soviet group SMERSH and, on film, were often affiliated with Cold War offensives. "I remember when we were making *GoldenEye*, everybody was saying, 'The Cold War's over.



Sam Mendes and Léa Seydoux keep warm inside from the snow.



And he had mate in two!

You can't have a Bond film without amazing cars.

There's no villains. The world's at peace. What are you going to do? There's no need for Bond anymore," recalls Broccoli. "Well, that wasn't true then, it isn't true now. Our villains are not political, they don't have any specific agenda. They're just good, old-fashioned, nutty bad guys!" So what is *SPECTRE*'s agenda? "Let's say it reflects contemporary concerns that are



Daniel Craig needs a windscreen specialist.

Dave Bautista brings extra Drax appeal.



He flies through the air with the greatest of ease...

“We all missed and loved the fun of those early mid-’70s Bonds”

going on to this day, things about how we live, how we’re observed,” dodges Wilson with a smile. “Who’s really in control,” chimes in Broccoli, “that kind of Fleming creation of these characters who are pulling the strings behind the scenes.”

RETURNING VILLAIN?

Bringing back SPECTRE opens the way for the organisation’s most famous member and legendary behind-the-scenes string-puller, Ernst Stavro Blofeld. So is Waltz’s Oberhauser (who shares a name with the man who took in an orphaned James Bond as a boy when his parents were killed) actually Blofeld? Waltz smiles enigmatically at the question, “Of course we know the subject, so we jump at conclusions.” Well-drilled in secret-keeping over the years, Wilson and Broccoli aren’t saying either, while Craig and Mendes protest that audiences prefer to be kept in the dark.

Which is all well and good if secrets can be kept, as they have been on previous Bond films. (“Amazingly, no one really found out that Judi [Dench] died!” marvels Mendes of the big *Skyfall* twist.) But the fan speculation on *SPECTRE* has reached new heights thanks to

an entire script and studio notes being leaked as part of last year’s Sony hacking. The documents seemed to indicate squabbles over budget, an unsatisfactory ending and a shocking family link for Bond.

“It was an old script,” dismisses Broccoli, “and the stuff about us having fights about the budget: well, what’s new? We want to put all the money on the screen. We want to deliver the best film we can. We fight for as much money as we can to make the film. And that’s no secret.”

Mendes is similarly unfazed. The script, he explains, had already morphed from the leaked version. “When you’re working on a script you’re going down blind alleys, trying a new character out, trying a sequence out... It’s like building a giant Meccano toy. You build a bit, it topples over, you take it off again, and you put on another bit. If anyone was actually trying to piece it together, they would get nowhere, really, because so much of it changed.”

In fact, for Mendes, the leak was the least of his problems on a gruelling shoot globetrotting from Rome and London to Austria, Mexico and Tangier. “I had one day off in eight months of shooting and nine months of prep. It’s one of →

SHADOW DANGER

New Bond baddie Christoph Waltz evades questioning...



How will *SPECTRE* be different from *Skyfall*?

→ I hope it’s not the same. *Skyfall* was there already. That’s the thinking lately, to bank on the known and more or less rob the audience of the very reason to go to the movies – to see something unexpected and to have an experience.

What can we expect?

→ A new story. Development. Further intellect. New revelations about that character who we think we know so well. [Smiles] Well, maybe we don’t.

We know you’re the head of *SPECTRE*...

→ How do you know that my character is the head of *SPECTRE*? You don’t. Exactly. That’s how we set ourselves up for disappointment because disappointment comes only from expectation.

There was a lot of speculation with the Sony hacking.

→ I wonder, to tell you the truth, where people find the time to occupy themselves with all that. Don’t they have something more interesting? Who cares what they say about whom?

You don’t feel it derailed this production?

→ No, when they triumphantly announced that they have hacked the new Bond script – no they haven’t; they have hacked an old Bond script that was not even part of the discussion anymore.

What was it like joining the Bond family?

→ You’re a little bit like the new boy at school, but for about an hour-and-a-half. They’re so absolutely wonderful and you become part of the thing. That’s why everybody loves to come back and do more and be with them. It reminded me of movies I made in the ’70s – only I didn’t do them with 500 people, I did them with 15.

REX (C)

those movies that was really hard until halfway. It was particularly tough, physically gruelling – a lot of injuries, illness. We hit the wall halfway, then broke through it. By the end, we were... I won't say sprinting exactly, but we weren't staggering over the line!"

Mendes may be on set every day but most of his cast are not. Apart from one man. "If you're doing what Daniel's doing on a film, that is exhausting because you're in there every day – that's just as exhausting as doing a play," comments Craig's Q co-star, Ben Whishaw. Craig admits the hours can be tough: "Life takes second place, which is terrible. I'm not alone, the crew are in the same boat. We sometimes work terrible hours and the crew don't see their families for weeks on end. It's really fucking tough. You have to look after each other and take care of each other and jolly each other along a bit because it sucks."

That jolly along isn't just cheerleading either. Craig is instrumental in decisions on Bond, as keen to protect the 007 legacy as Broccoli and Wilson. "I said to Barbara 10 years ago, 'I need the confidence to walk on set and pretend to be James Bond because I'm not James Bond,'" he laughs. "I'm a long way off being him. But if you give me the confidence to feel part of what's going on, and to be able to input into this, what the films are about and what we can collaborate on, then I can give it a go.' They did. They opened their arms."

Now on his fourth film, Craig's input proved invaluable to Mendes and was part of the lure to direct a second time after he said he wouldn't come back for more. "What's lovely about it the second time around is you have that shorthand," says Mendes. "When I came on *Skyfall*, he knew the part better than I did because he'd done two movies playing this role. On this one, he was absolutely invaluable. He



Ben Whishaw's Q: better with technology than jumpers.



Monica Bellucci plays a widow that Bond gets close to.



SPECTRE is the first film of any kind Daniel Craig has made since 2012's *Skyfall*.

“The crew don't see their families for weeks on end”

had great instincts and we were more relaxed with each other. We had a lot of laughs and worked incredibly hard and pushed each other.”

WHAT WOULD CUBBY THINK

So what has that collaboration created, especially under the extreme audience expectation and studio pressure to beat *Skyfall*? “As my dad [Cubby Broccoli] used to say, ‘fear focuses the mind,’” Broccoli smiles, “and I think we’re all focused very much on delivering a movie that is going to meet – if not surpass – expectations, and that’s part of the fun and the challenge.” *SFX* wonders what he would have made of where his superspy franchise has ended up...

“He would love Daniel,” says Broccoli, lighting up. “That’s a real sadness from me, that he never got the opportunity to see him because I think he would have loved the way that Daniel portrays the character. He was a great believer from the very beginning that Bond was very sustainable and would go on

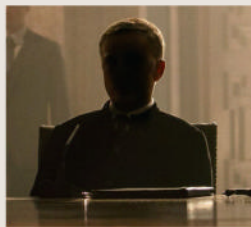
and on and on, beyond him, beyond all of us. I think it’s a great kind of affirmation of his belief that we’re all still here.”

Speaking of going on beyond, there’s little left of Fleming’s original books to use so thoughts inevitably turn to where Craig might go in his next, and – apparently – final, film. “If you’re a Fleming fan – and if you’re someone who reads them over and over again – you’re always looking for clues, and they’re few and far between,” Craig admits. “We’ve mined as much as we can, and maybe we’ll find some more.” And don’t count on Mendes returning for a hat trick: “If I’d [thought about doing a second film] with *Skyfall*, I wouldn’t possibly have envisaged this movie. You only make what you can make. Where he goes next and where it goes next, is for later on. You can only really focus on what you’ve got in front of you,” says Mendes. “I’m surprised I ended up doing two, even now, but I’m really pleased that I did...”

SPECTRE opens in the UK on 26 October.

S P E C T R A L

Classified trivia on Bond's arch nemesis



Blofeld's a bit of a chameleon in Ian Fleming's novels: a bulky man with a black crew-cut in *Thunderball*,

skinner with long silver hair and a syphilitic nose in *OHMSS*, muscular and moustached with a gold tooth in *You Only Live Twice*.

The end credits of *From Russia With Love* credited Blofeld with a question mark. In reality Anthony Dawson was the unseen face of the cat-fondler while Eric Pohlman provided the Silky Voice of Menace.

From Russia With Love revealed that

A N A L Y S I S

SPECTRE has its own private island called *SPECTRE* Island. Imagine the brand strategy meetings behind that one.

Charles Gray played Blofeld with hair – and briefly dragged up, panto style – in *Diamonds Are Forever*.

The Spy Who Loved Me originally

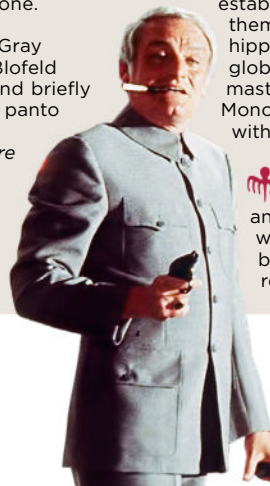
began with a new generation of international terrorists overthrowing the old guard of *SPECTRE*, establishing themselves as hipper, hairier globe-threatening masterminds. Monorails? Get with it, grandad!

Blofeld enjoyed an anonymous, wheelchair-bound resurrection in



the pre-title sequence of 1981's *For Your Eyes Only*, only to be unceremoniously tipped down a Beckton gas tower. He was played by John Hollis – alias Lobot in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Nick Setchfield





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BRUCE CAMPBELL

The Chin battles Deadites once more with chainsaw and... man-girdle?!

Words by Joseph McCabe // Photography by Maarten de Boer

Few genre stars have won the kind of fan love that Bruce Campbell has enjoyed throughout his career. Since creating the role of the fearless, clueless Ashley "Ash" J Williams in the original *Evil Dead*, he's brought his charisma, wit and physical prowess to countless projects – not to mention the legendary jawline that inspired the title of his 2009 memoir *If Chins Could Kill – Confessions Of A B Movie Actor*. Now he's back in his signature role, reactivating his longtime collaboration with director Sam Raimi and producer Rob Tapert, in TV's *Ash Vs Evil Dead*. The new show also teams him with fellow *Xena* veteran Lucy Lawless in a horror comedy that continues the saga he began in 1981, while introducing it to a new generation of gorehounds. As he tells *SFX* after wrapping production on the first season, playing the heroic but idiotic Ash is as much fun as ever...

In the years since *Army Of Darkness*, did you have any ideas as to what you'd like to see Ash do on a return?

❖ No, no. I actually had to put him in a little box and put him up on the shelf, because there wasn't much of a likelihood that he'd ever come back. So there's no point in torturing yourself about what you could and couldn't do. But now that he's back, I've been enjoying playing the character again very much. It's very familiar territory. It's a very loose playing field. Ash can get away with a bunch of weird shit, and I like that as a leading guy.

Is that why an older Ash can still entertain audiences? Other franchise icons, like Indiana Jones and The Terminator, received mixed reactions from fans when they returned after long absences...

❖ That's always a risk. But we're not hiding the fact that Ash is a middle-aged guy now. The guy's got dentures and wears a handmade man-girdle. So this is not your typical hero. This is a guy who could barely keep his shit together 24 years ago when we did *Army Of Darkness*. He was barely qualified then. Now he's completely unqualified. He really would just rather hang out at bars late at night, picking up chicks and lying about how he lost his hand. But now because of his own stupidity he's forced back into saving the world at the worst time ever... I love the fact that Ash isn't trained in anything. That's why people can relate to him.

The original films didn't use CG. Will the show continue their aesthetic?

❖ Oh for sure. I lopped off some creature's head not long ago and I doused the entire crew with blood. I didn't get hardly any on me. But when pressurised blood is flowing through a tube and you're cutting into it, you really don't know where it's gonna go. That's the awesome part. Digital blood, they know exactly where it goes. Bullshit.

How does the gore level in *Ash Vs Evil Dead* compare with the movies?

❖ This is an unrated TV series. The first two *Evil Dead*s were unrated. That's really the way these movies function best. *Army Of Darkness* had to be compromised because contractually we had to deliver an R-rated movie. This is nothin', man. The blood's gonna flow. It's gonna be carnage and mayhem on parade. We can do whatever we want.

The pairing of you and Lucy Lawless looks like a match made in geek heaven.

❖ Yeah, it is heaven. I've been around a while and Lucy's been around a while, and we met on *Xena* when she was first coming out. You would think it's her first day on set whenever she walks on. She's the most unaffected person on the set. Sheena Easton, the singer, was a guest star on *Brisco County Jr*, the show I did 20 years ago, and she turned to the cameraman and said, "I can only be photographed on this side." He laughed in her face [laughs]. He said, "Sheena, I'm gonna make you look good from every side." We don't have time for that horseshit here. We're making television. Lucy understands the pace and the grind of it. That's who you want to surround yourself with.

Do you find it strange that at this point in your career you're generating more hours of Ash than ever before?

❖ Oh, it's daunting. Being number one on the call sheet, there's a lot of actors who would happily knock me out in a back alley and take my place for that type of privilege, to star in a TV show. But about halfway through the shoot you go, "Oh, I'm such an idiot. Why did I say yes to this?" Just because of the grind of it... It took 12 years to generate four and a half hours worth of material. In four months, we've generated five hours of material. So it's coming. People are gonna get their Ash, they're gonna get their *Evil Dead*, they're gonna get their Sam Raimi on. And god bless the fans. I'm here because of them. There's no other reason. ●

Ash Vs Evil Dead airs on Starz in the US from 31 October. UK broadcast is TBC.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Actor

Born

→ 22 June 1958

From

→ Royal Oak, Michigan

Greatest hits

→ *The Evil Dead*, *Evil Dead II*, *Army Of Darkness*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *The Adventures Of Brisco County Jr*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *Bubba Ho-Tep*, *Spider-Man*

Random fact

→ Campbell has tried many times to "kill" Sam Raimi's beloved 1973 Oldsmobile Delta 88, which appears in many of the director's films. But it lives yet again in *Ash Vs Evil Dead*.



BRUCE CAMPBELL

**"IT'S GONNA BE
CARNAGE AND
MAYHEM ON
PARADE"**





PERSONALITY CRISIS

They're calling it "*Indiana Jones*, but scarier..." Ian Berriman is on set for ITV's thrill-packed new take on **JEKYLL AND HYDE**

Not often does someone snag a showrunner job by accident, but that's pretty much what happened to Charlie Higson after he was called in for a chat by ITV. "I pitched it by mistake!" the author/former *Fast Show* star explains. "ITV wanted their equivalent of *Doctor Who*, their own in-house family drama. They said, 'We want something big and bold with elements of fantasy, horror and adventure. It needs to be a known brand, something quintessentially British, but something you could do a twist on. I said, 'So something like *Jekyll And Hyde*?' and they said 'Brilliant! Can you write us a treatment?' I said, 'I'm not pitching the bloody thing, I'm just trying to work out what you want!' And they said, 'That's exactly what we want!'"

Having accidentally landed the gig, Higson had to figure out an approach that would work in what we've come to think of as the *Doctor Who*/*Merlin*/*Primeval* timeslot. The key to unlocking it: considering Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde* as the source from which superhero stories stem.

"It was the birth of so many things which are still current now," Higson says. "That whole idea of the alter ego, the secret personality – it feeds into all that superhero stuff."

Tom Bateman stars as Robert Jekyll, a descendant of the original doctor whose powers – super-human strength, speed and near-invulnerability – are the result of a genetic inheritance he initially has no knowledge of.

"I came up with this idea that the Jekylls have always had this ability to change who they

are, but it'd laid dormant," Higson explains. "Through taking potions the original Jekyll awoke something latent within him, and the grandson's inherited the same thing. He starts to change in the first episode and doesn't know what the fuck's going on!"

There's an obvious issue with spinning family-friendly fodder from Stevenson's concept, of course. Though the book's discreet about Hyde's crimes, he's certainly a murderer. We're also given an account of him brutally trampling a child underfoot.

"Perfect idea for a kids' series," Higson laughs, "the most evil man in the world! He can't do *too* terrible things. Here it's more about letting go of repression, doing all those things you'd like to be doing but think, 'I'd better not, I'm a nice respectable person.' Jekyll and Hyde have the same aims but go →



Tom Bateman plays the respectable Jekyll, and the uncontrollable Hyde.



Hyde was known to overreact to spilt beer.

about it very differently, and once Hyde's let out of the bag he's hard to control. It's that *Incredible Hulk* thing really, in that he's desperately trying not to let the Hulk out and you as the audience are going, 'Come on! Go green!'"

Finding someone who could master both aspects of the part was a challenge. Producer Foz Allan explains that Bateman won out because he was one of the few auditionees who could – and yet still remain likeable.

"It's a big ask," Allan admits. "We saw 40 or so young actors, but very few could do both. Then we had a couple who could, but their Hyde was too dark. Tom is fantastically affable, and you sense that in his Hyde. You want to spend time with this guy. You couldn't have cast Anthony Hopkins in *The Silence Of The Lambs*, something genuinely horrible and cold. It would have destroyed the show."

Another key aspect of the set-up is the time period. Rather than "doing a *Sherlock*", Higson plumped for locating the series in the '30s – an era he knows well from his Young Bond books.

"I felt there was a lot we could feed into that," Higson says. "The great thing about

the '30s is it was the birth of the modern horror film, so I'm trying to put in my version of all those Universal monsters. There's a version of Frankenstein, a Dracula figure, zombies and werewolves..."

For Foz Allan, the series also has a flavour of another franchise initially set in that era: "I think it's *Indiana Jones*, but scarier."

LET'S TALK ABOUT SETS

Time to take a quick stroll around some of the sets at *Jekyll And Hyde's* studio base. First up, part of Jekyll's London home. A portrait of his

grandfather hangs on the wall, as do mounted boars' heads – a subliminal reminder of the family's struggle to overcome beastly impulses?

Next, a swish art deco office which would suit any high-ranking civil servant... if it weren't for some of the more outlandish ornaments, like a cabinet crammed with animal skulls. A document on the desk detailing "Operational Commitments" is stamped "TOP SECRET". This is the territory of Richard E Grant's Sir Roger Bulstrode, head of MIO, a shadowy governmental organisation whose *modus operandi* recalls Torchwood, or *Being Human's* Men in Grey.

CH-CH-CHANGES Selected spins on Stevenson



MARVEL'S MISTER HYDE

→ Stan Lee supervillain, who debuted in 1963, is no relation to Jekyll, but rather an amoral biochemist inspired by Stevenson's story. Kyle MacLachlan recently played a version of the character in *Agents Of SHIELD*.



DR JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE

→ Brian Clemens scripted this 1971 Hammer film, which saw Ralph Bates transform into Bond girl Martine Beswick. "Warning! The sexual transformation of a man into a woman will actually take place before your very eyes!" teased the poster.



THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MISS OSBOURNE

→ This 1981 film by Walerian Borowczyk, director of *La Bête*, is typically idiosyncratic. Not only is Hyde played by a different actor, but the transformation involves Jekyll thrashing about in a bath full of chemicals.



JEKYLL

→ James Nesbitt played a descendant of the good doctor in this six-part 2007 series by Steven Moffat, whose wisecracking Hyde in many ways anticipated what the writer went on to do with Moriarty and Missy.



Richard E Grant heads up MIO, the government's monster-control division.

"Their job's to remove monsters and anything supernatural from the public domain so people know nothing that's going on," Higson says. "In the first episode there's this young guy joining who says, 'Are you pulling my leg? There aren't any monsters!' And Richard E Grant says, 'That's because we're so good at our job...'"

In keeping with the dualism at the heart of the tale, MIO is just one of two diametrically opposed organisations that Jekyll/Hyde becomes entangled with, the other being Tenebrae (Latin for "shadows" or "darkness") – basically a league of monsters.

"These two organisations are competing for his soul," Higson explains. "If he goes to his Hyde side he'll lean towards Tenebrae; if he goes to his Jekyll side he'll lean the other way. But he doesn't trust either."

Incidentally, not *all* of those monsters are updates of the Universal horror pantheon, as Foz Allan reveals: "There's a 7' 4" man with a huge lobster claw. There's people who kiss you to death. The Harbinger is a dog with a man's head. Then there's Mr Wax and upside-down-face lady..." If nothing else, it sounds like this series has the makings of a fantastic range of action figures.

Stepping into Jekyll's lab, a dingy, faintly

Batcave-ish subterranean space, we discover that dualism's expressed in the sets too, when designer Catrin Meredydd points out something we hadn't spotted: "We decided that one half was very much tiled and ordered and like the Underground system, and the other was rock face, unhewn, a wilder side of him."

It also exists in the form of not one but two love interests. On the one hand there's "nice girl" Lily, played by Stephanie Hyam.

"She becomes the embodiment of everything pure and good that Jekyll wants to preserve," Higson explains. "But the triggers for Hyde are hormonal – fuck or fight – so anything that might arouse him too much he has to back off from. So he's constantly getting into situations with Lily where he has to pull away because he doesn't want Hyde to emerge."

Then there's Bella, played by Natalie Gumedé.

"She runs this criminal empire from a pub, and is dealing with crime and violence every day, so he can relax and be himself. When he's Hyde he goes and hangs out with her. But she doesn't just accept that – it's like, 'You only turn up when you're drunk!' So there's a lot of fun to be had with that."

The importance of interweaving believable relationships with the fantastical elements is something Higson came to appreciate after his previous experience of genre TV, the 2000-2001 revival of *Randall And Hopkirk (Deceased)*.

"I loved doing *Randall And Hopkirk*, but I didn't quite manage to pull it off," Higson reflects. "What Russell T Davies managed to do with *Doctor Who*, really cleverly, was keep all the fantasy and sci-fi, but marry it with a very real, strong dramatic core with Rose and her family. So I'm trying to make the relationships strong and interesting so you can buy into that, and then accept all the more fantastical stuff."

If ratings are good, Higson has plenty of ideas for where the show can go next: "I had to do rough storylines for series two and three to prove it has legs." So why should people tune in?

"Because it's the sort of thing that I'd have loved to watch when I was 14. There's a lot of fighting, lots of monsters, a lot of CGI and stunts. It's a big, bold, exciting, fantasy

action-adventure series of the type that we don't make enough of here." ●

Jekyll And Hyde starts on ITV during October. The End, the final book in Charlie Higson's YA horror series The Enemy, is out on 29 October.



The new show is set in the '30s for a modern horror, Indiana Jones feel.

HYDE AND SPEAK

Jekyll And Hyde star Tom Bateman on his dual role



How did you approach playing Hyde?

→ I looked for inspiration in certain places. I quite liked Heath Ledger's Joker. It's the mischief. He's somehow all-powerful. The enjoyment in that. It's not being evil for evil's sake. He enjoys his power over other people. He is dark in what he does, in the original book; Charlie's given him lightness as well. He's a funny guy. He's just having a great time. There's a great line about Heath Ledger's Joker – "Some men just want to watch the world burn." It's like that. You can go dark with that, but that's actually a bit boring, because no one is evil in their own mind. They do it for their reasons. He's not evil. He's just powerful and enjoys his power, and other people are weak. Whenever they give me the note, "Enjoy this", it unlocks something else. It's actually a lot more human and 3D to do it like that.

Do you have to carry yourself differently?

→ Yeah, very much. The great thing about setting it in this period is people were so stiff and self-conscious about how they were perceived and how they held themselves... being a gentleman, being polite. Hyde is the opposite. He's totally liberated. He doesn't have any of these physical constraints. Plus he's stronger, whereas Jekyll's a bit more afraid and intimidated by things. With Hyde, there's no consequence. People shoot him and he goes, "This is just fun!" So that's the physical openness of him, just going, "I'm infallible." That helps as well.



HEROES & INSPIRATIONS

NICK FROST

The Cornetto Trilogy star tells Nick Setchfield how much he loves Spielberg, Tom Baker and Triffids

Portraits by James Leighton-Burns

“I felt like I had a story,” says Nick Frost. He’s talking *Truths, Half Truths And Little White Lies*, his new autobiography, the secret origin of the Dagenham boy who became the screen’s ultimate best mate. Distinctly unstarry despite a career trajectory that’s taken him from *Spaced* to Spielberg, Frost is happy to munch HobNobs and share some of his passions with *SFX*. Not, he stresses, that he was a pureblood, bedroom-bound geek as a kid. “If I could be over a deserted piece of ground throwing bricks at a burnt-out Escort Mk 2 then I’d rather be doing that...”

THE X-FILES

“If I think about *The X-Files* I think about me and Simon [Pegg] in my old flat in Cricklewood. There was no furniture in it. There was a sofa bed and a cupboard on its side, and I had a gas heater that we put the telly on, and a video. And we just watched endless box sets, constantly. Apart from *Sapphire And Steel* it was the most amazing thing I’d ever seen on telly. I think in the pilot there’s a moment where Mulder and Scully are walking back from a grave, and they do that thing where you’re walking along in a street and you just kind of bump into one another... We must have rewound that 10 times. There were so many times when Simon and I were like, “Whoa, they touched hands!” He was injured and she held him or something like that. I got a secret nod that it was coming back. I remember texting Simon saying, “Hey, do you want to know something fucking amazing?” And he texted back to say, “Yeah, I do!” And then I didn’t reply. Then I got another one from him saying “I SAID I DO.” I texted him back and said, “Fucking *X-Files* is coming back!” Yeah, I think it’s going to be fantastic.

TOM BAKER

“As a child I was a different kettle of fish. I was about playing outside and dirt and rugby and Action Man. I didn’t watch a lot of television but Saturday evenings was *Doctor Who* and my Doctor was Tom Baker. He just seemed so fucking crazy, right? Not in a bad way, not like “Whoa, he could stab someone...” He was batty. He kind of frightened and thrilled me in equal measure. But I liked the baddies. I liked the Sontarans and the Cybermen and the Daleks. I always wanted them to win but I was always aware that would be a short season.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

“I thought it was a documentary in terms of it affecting me so much. My Auntie Melanie lives

in a small town in Wales and they used to have a big American air force base. She went out with one of the airmen and he would bring her VHS tapes to watch. One day he came in with this box with a New York-style cheese pizza in it – which I’d never had before – and *Close Encounters*. And me and him and my mum and dad and Auntie Melanie sat and watched it and ate fucking pizza. It was amazing. Even then it wasn’t lost on me that this was a film where a man’s life was crumbling. His marriage was ending. It’s that great thing that Spielberg does where you get so hooked on Roy Neary – it’s like what Edgar does in *Shaun Of The Dead*, in a way. He’s splitting up with Liz and that’s his main concern. And as viewers that relationship is what you buy into. And at the back of that is the zombies, or in this case François Truffaut and the aliens. I just bought it. →

Close Encounters:
“I just bought it.”



KOBAL (1)

“Between takes Spielberg would talk about *Close Encounters* and *ET* and George...”

HARD HOUSE

◉ Ninety per cent of the time I'm listening to really hard house. I was a clubber. At 16 I was going to Raindance and Telepathy, pop-ups and things in shit barns. It's quite good being semi-famous now. I've contacted these guys called the Tidy Boys who are some of the biggest hard house DJs. It means I can now go behind the DJ, which is great. I listen to it in the car or if I'm writing. The repetitive nature of it – and the fact that even though it seems chaotic it's very logical – is a calming influence. It's like an equation. You can see what they're going to do at any one point. It works for me.

STEVEN SPIELBERG

◉ He directed me in *Tintin*. I try not to be nervous because then it becomes something else. I'm there to perform. I'm not there to fanboy over him. Fortunately for me and Simon, in between takes he would talk about *Close Encounters* and *ET* and things that he'd done with George and bets they'd had... For the first week we'd just hang out behind the monitor. It was at that point I could sense myself thinking, “Okay, what can you say that means he won't think you're a dick?” Most days on set you could see him trying to work out his perfect shot. How old is he now? In his sixties? To see him dance on set after a great take... you want to be around that. I love doing this job and to see that he still has that spark after how many films he's made is an inspiration.

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

◉ I'm starting to write a novel about a man who's the last person on Earth. I love that notion and I think John Wyndham did it so well. It seemed so bleak and so English. I got a bonus for a thing I did and I looked on the



Just don't mess with his first editions.

internet and tracked down a first edition from 1953. Amazing cover, really beautiful cover. It's a really expensive thing that I've got and I hate because I don't know what to do with it. I can't put it on a bookshelf because that would be in sunlight, and I don't want it to bleach. I moved house and I put it into my bedside cabinet, thinking, “I'll leave it there, it's in the dark, no one can hurt it.” I used to have an en-suite toilet. I moved into a house without one, but there was still a cupboard where my old toilet was. I woke up one morning and, to cut a long story short, I had got up in the night and I had pissed in my bedside cabinet. As I opened the drawer it was full of piss and the book was just floating on top. I was so fucking cross and upset

that I just felt nothing. I took the dust jacket off and I got like 10 towels. I put five on the floor and then I lay the book on top and covered it with the other towels. And then just left it. I literally couldn't look at it for four days, such was my anger. I've managed to get it back to a near-pristine level. No aroma. Well, no more than a musty 70-year-old book anyway. But I just got a new kitten six weeks ago and he's a little fucker. I let him into my room the other day. He was chewing on the fucking spine. The same book. I might sell it. It feels doomed. Like it's haunted or I'm just not meant to have it. ●

Truths, Half Truths And Little White Lies is out now.



Frost is a *little* bit excited about the new *X-Files*.



Nick Frost and Simon Pegg played Thomson and Thompson in Spielberg's *Tintin*.



The Fourth Doctor “frightened and thrilled me in equal measure.”

SCOTT
ADKINS

MICHAEL JAI
WHITE

MICHELLE
LEE

JOHN
RHYS-DAVIES

THE HEROES ARE BACK

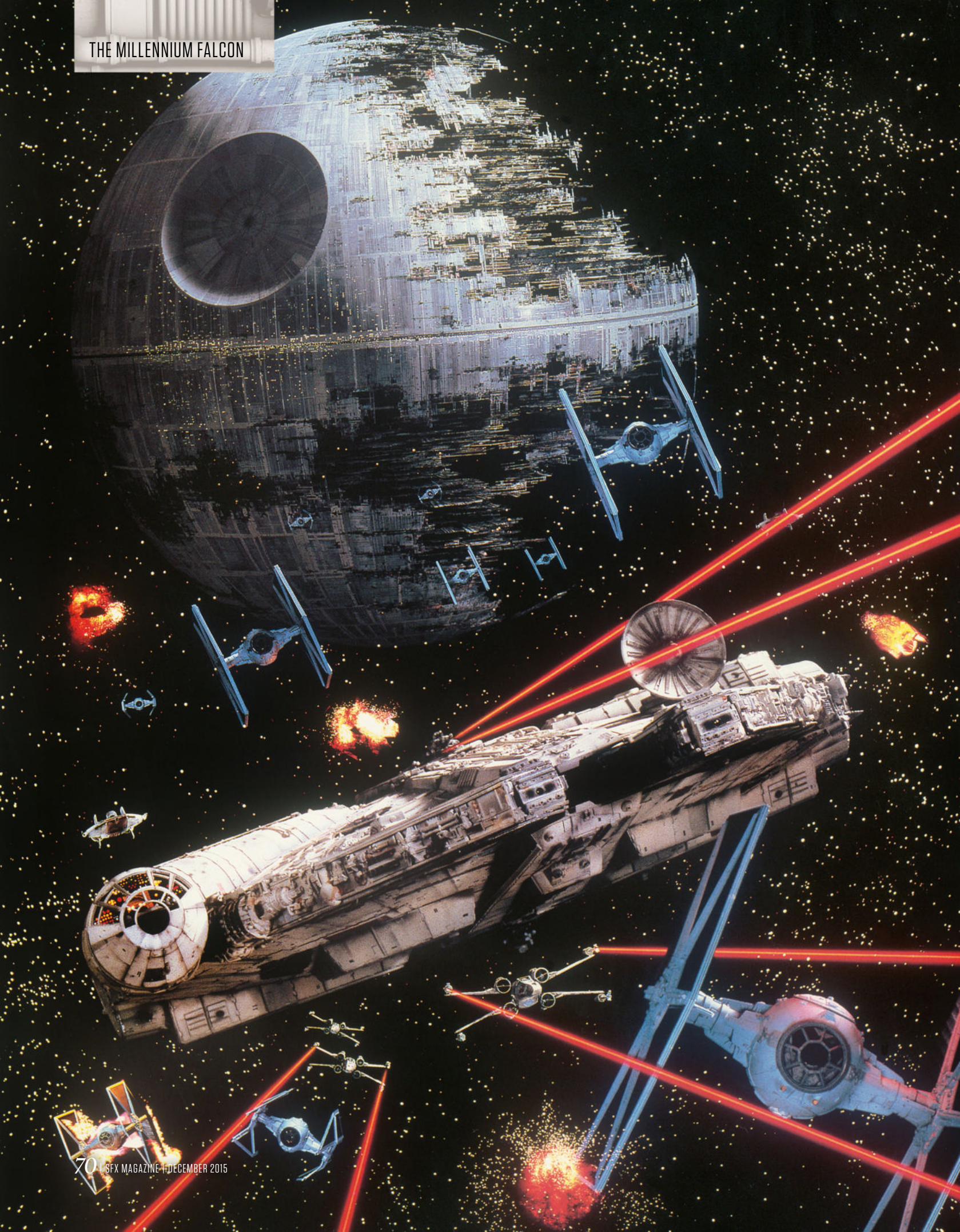


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THE MILLENNIUM FALCON





"SHE'S GOT IT WHERE IT COUNTS, KID!"

STAR WARS set decorator Roger Christian tells Oliver Pfeiffer how he helped create a sci-fi classic



If ever a spaceship became synonymous with a screen character it's the Millennium Falcon. Just as veteran *Star Wars* space pirate Han Solo will make an eagerly anticipated return in *The Force Awakens*, so too will the ship that famously made the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs. But the iconic bucket-of-bolts may have lost some of that essential appeal had its original, far more conventional design been brought to the screen back in 1977...

"The first concept was felt to look very similar to another ship seen on the TV series *Space: 1999*," says Roger Christian, the Oscar-winning set decorator behind *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*, who was tasked with the construction of the Falcon. "I

think George [Lucas] accidentally said 'make it like a hamburger!' which was his favourite food at the time."

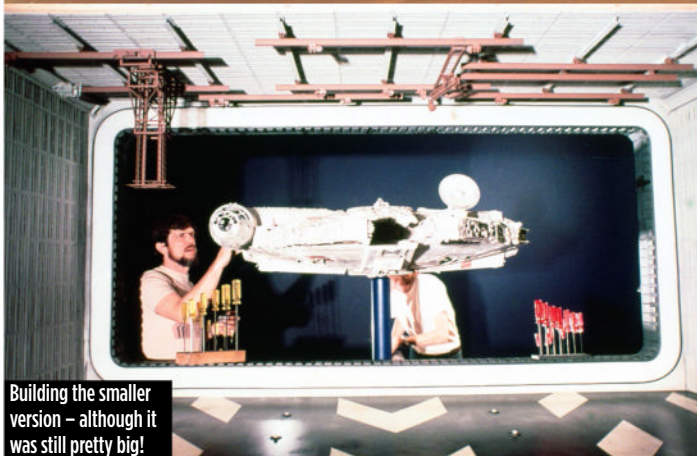
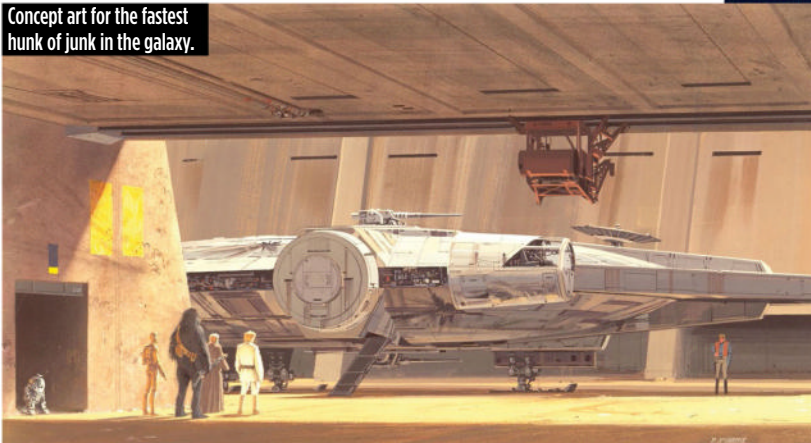
Production illustrator Ralph McQuarrie's originally linear Falcon design was instead modified into the Rebels' Blockade Runner, Tantive IV, the first ship seen entering the *Star Wars* universe in *A New Hope*. In fact the only noticeable design aspect that was utilised from McQuarrie's original concept was the cockpit, which derived from the Boeing B-29 Superfortress – a fighter plane used in World War Two. Significantly, McQuarrie's Falcon realigned that cockpit from a conventional front positioning to the rather irregular side of that "half-eaten hamburger" design. "I think that was great – it created a ship that had never been seen before or since and that round shape

has become a very iconic kind of image," reflects Christian.

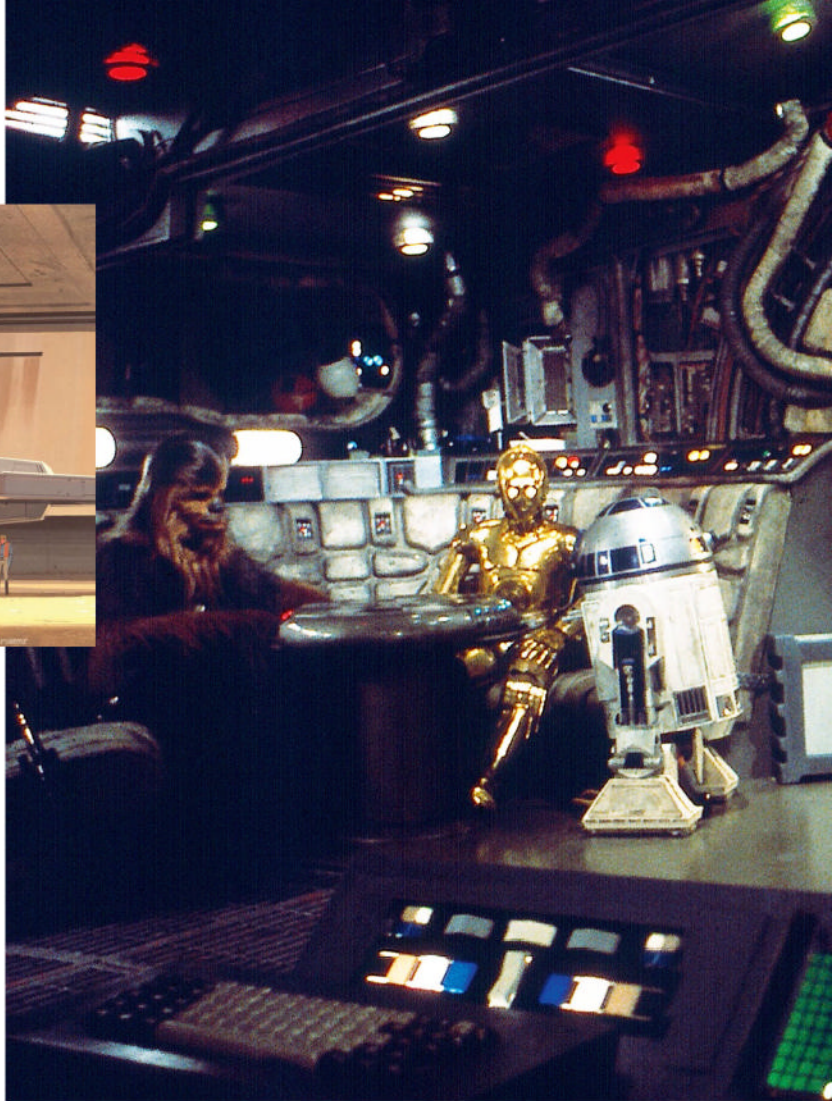
From McQuarrie's painting, miniature effects illustrator and designer Joe Johnston drew further sketches and made a miniature model, enabling the design process to evolve further. "He laughs about it now because it was literally making a hamburger into a ship!" says Christian. "We never met because we were on two different sides of the Atlantic and there wasn't email. We'd just get a package once a week and we'd look and go, 'Oh my god this is what we gotta build!' and we'd send back drawings. That's how it was done in those early days."

And it was from Johnston's model that the set decorator inherited an apparent defect that was nevertheless built into the ship. "Joe was →

Concept art for the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy.



Building the smaller version – although it was still pretty big!



FALCON FACTS

How scrap metal became cinematic gold

Production designer John Barry didn't have the stage size to build the entire ship so only half of the Falcon was actually constructed. Matte painting was used to realise the other half of the ship.

To construct the Millennium Falcon, scaffolding was first assembled, then a wooden frame was built before plywood panels with actual scrap metal parts were screwed on. These were cast in plaster to replicate the design. The scrap was all sourced from discarded aircraft carrier parts.

Set decorator Roger Christian also used scrapped undercarriage from eight massive RAF aircraft transport carriers to help dress the exterior of the Falcon.

Christian carefully observed how aircraft were fuelled and as a result hung similar pipes and oil drips from the Falcon's exterior to further enhance its raw and realistic look.

PVC piping and a mixture of prebuilt switch panels were used to make up the interior of the Main Hold control section. The remainder of the interior walls was built up layer upon layer with pipes and selected pieces of airplane scrap.



Oil and rust was used to give the Falcon that unmistakable lived-in aged look.

Jet fighter seats were sourced and adapted for the Falcon's cockpit. The lever Han uses to enter hyperspace was also scoured from scrap aeroplane parts.

Due to budget restrictions, instead of building an expensive gimbal to twist and turn the cockpit set during combat scenes, the camera was tilted accordingly to mimic movement.

Upon completion of production the Falcon was dismantled to make room for Stanley Kubrick's work on *The Shining*. An entirely new Falcon was built for subsequent *Star Wars* films.

Roger Christian won an Oscar for his *Star Wars* set decoration and has fittingly titled his forthcoming memoir *Cinema Alchemist*, (about his work on the set decoration in *Star Wars* and *Alien*) because he says he managed to turn scrap metal into gold!

constructing the model and he saw a piece he didn't like and knocked it off but we inherited that and it got built full size," he reveals.

"There's a piece of the Falcon that's actually like bad glue, although you wouldn't be able to tell now. Joe now says, 'You built our mistake into the full sized ship!'"

A NEW, OLD SHIP

Essential to the distinctive design and feel of the Falcon was achieving a lived-in look that was light years away from the clean-cut aesthetics of spaceships seen in countless films and TV shows. "George said the Falcon had been repaired and repaired and broken down numerous times, and that Han had no money so he constantly stuck bits onto it and bought second-hand parts to somehow keep it going," reveals Christian. "It was like having an old racecar that's still really fast and could do everything but it was on faith and string. We were never given the age of the Falcon but we knew it was older than Han and that it had been through the wars – so that was our take on it. It was the first thing in the film that looked really aged and set the tone for everything."

Oscar-nominated art director Harry Lange, who was behind the interiors on Stanley Kubrick's 1968 epic *2001: A Space Odyssey*, was appointed to work on the Falcon's cockpit. "He created the panels and switches slightly like *2001* was done and then I came along and

FORD FOCUS

How the Falcon made an almighty first impression on its captain

"What a heap of junk!" may have been the initial reaction of a young Luke Skywalker after he first caught sight of the Millennium Falcon in *A New Hope* – and there's an element of truth in that statement – but in actuality the colossal structure made quite an impression on the cast, including a young Harrison Ford.

"It was a huge set and it was so impressive when you walked in there. I was there when Harrison walked around the stages and he was just blown away by the scale and reality of it!" remembers Roger Christian. "Before that science fiction was pretty hokey stuff so I don't think he fully expected it. I think it helped him understand that there was something special that George was doing. It looked amazing because it was the first time anybody had ever seen a spaceship that looked real. It was fantasy you felt could work."



This December we'll get to see if the Falcon's sporting a few new furnishings...

fucked it all up to give it the *Star Wars* look!" laughs Christian. "It would've been too clean but it was a good basis. I put in pipes and bits of dressing to try and personalise it. The exterior had to look used and pretty beaten up and the cockpit had to be fantasy that you felt could work."

That personalisation included the now blink-and-you'll-miss-it inclusion of some infamous chrome hanging dice. "I was trying to personalise the cockpit and I said to George that I noticed he put dice in Ron Howard's car in *American Graffiti*, which was a hit film, so placing hanging dice in the Falcon was both to bring good luck and because it's Harrison Ford and it's exactly what Han would do," says Christian. "George agreed to it. Only later did I find out that [cinematographer] Gilbert Taylor eventually took the chrome dice down and they never got put back, so if you see the film they're actually only in there for a couple of early shots – then they're gone!"

However, one talented eagle-eyed fan did notice Christian's chrome dice and as a result they've been incorporated into the Falcon's cockpit for *The Force Awakens*. "I did a reddit session recently and told them the dice story and immediately we received an email to say, 'Go get the *Vanity Fair* cover now and look at it – your dice are there!'" explains Christian. "Apparently JJ Abrams had seen them and asked one of his assistants to go on eBay

and they managed to track some down so he's put them back in the Falcon. That's really something!"

Intriguingly, Christian has been in touch with one of the art directors behind *The Force Awakens*, who compared his experience working on the iconic ship. "He said, 'You know I'm doing what you did 38 years ago – but the difference is I get drawings and have to do it exactly as it's drawn, whereas you just went ahead with scrap and laid it in organically. To be honest I prefer your way!' So I think they were using the same techniques but they had the experience of all the films to draw on."

BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT

Of all the sets he decorated for the Falcon, Christian is particularly proud of the Main Hold area, featuring the holographic table where R2-D2 hilariously beats Chewbacca at an intergalactic version of chess and where Luke begins his Obi-Wan tutored lightsaber training. "I think that's my best set, it took at least six weeks to dress and I love that kind of aged, real science fiction look," he reflects. "My intention was to cover the walls entirely like a Russian submarine. This is how I imagine craft like the Millennium Falcon would be, like a large version of an Apollo capsule. There were no space stations then to reference, just military bomber cockpits, so really I made it all up from my own imagination."

Another instrumental part of the Falcon was the gunner station, where Luke and Han fight a squad of attacking TIE fighters after fleeing the Death Star. "That was all built already and didn't need to be dressed," reveals Christian. "Norman Reynolds [an additional art director] did all the drawings for that one and he was very good at how mechanical things could work. Everything was very carefully engineered because Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill were throwing themselves around in there and it had to be safe for them."

But did Christian have any inkling at the time that *Star Wars* would become so iconic? "I was certainly aware that I was watching something truly unique being made," he reveals. "Not that I knew it would probably become the most famous film in the history of cinema but I knew it would work if it could get out there and be seen. None of us were sure it would get out there. We literally had nothing to go on apart from blind faith, experimenting and a belief it would work."

It certainly helped that the celebrated set decorator was totally in sync with the notoriously tight-lipped director. "I just knew what George needed and was lucky I shared an identical vision," continues Christian. "I love myth and understood what the film was about and I love that kind of aged science fiction. In the end this vision of his worked and he pulled it off." ●



For a show that trades in espionage, it's no secret that *Marvel's Agents Of SHIELD* has had its wobbles. Introduced as the small-screen companion to the blockbusting MCU two years ago, the series took almost its entire first season to get its narrative juices flowing. It only truly took off after the big-screen revelation in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* that the evil cabal known as Hydra had infiltrated every last clandestine layer of the organisation. Now Agent Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg) was tasked by Nick Fury to be director of a new, ultra-secret version of SHIELD, fighting in deeper shadows than ever before.

Since then executive producers Jeph Loeb, Jeffrey Bell, Jed Whedon and Maurissa Tancharoen have been deep diving into the Marvel universe to extend the scope of the series, introducing us to the super-powered Inhumans in season two's major mythology arc. Skye (Chloe Bennet) has been revealed as Daisy

Johnson, aka the infamous Quake of *Secret Warriors* fame. In season three, Daisy, Coulson and their fellow agents are on a new mission to seek out other Inhumans, born out of exposure to Terrigen, a compound that triggers instant evolution in humans with latent superpowers.

"If you've been watching the show and are a fan, or if you haven't been watching but you used to, or are a new viewer, it's a very simple on-ramp, that people are suddenly going to pop and be enhanced in a way that is exciting and dynamic," Loeb tells *SFX*. "But it's going to be very troubling. When SHIELD arrives on the scene their idea is either to contain, to help or to recruit this individual. But as we've seen in the past, when SHIELD is making those decisions it won't always be the best for the individual."

And there's the rub. While Coulson and his team of agents have the best intentions, trying to stem the impact of what could be a global game-changer, there are plenty of complications. Second season finale "SOS" saw Daisy reject →

BEING INHUMAN

Marvel's superspies return to duty, as the world turns superpowered... Tara Bennett goes deep undercover with the show's creators

MISSION DEBRIEF

Who's who in *Agents Of SHIELD*

GRANT WARD BRETT DALTON

A Hydra operative posing as one of Coulson's team, Ward is revealed post *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. He escapes SHIELD and accidentally kills his lover, Kara Palamas. He takes over Hydra to go after his former team.

BOBBI MORSE ADRIANNE PALICKI

An agent of the "Real SHIELD", Morse worked with Coulson but is loyal to the rebuilding of the group without Nick Fury's web of secrets. Took a bullet to save her ex, Lance Hunter.

JEMMA SIMMONS ELIZABETH HENSTRIDGE

BioChem specialist for the SHIELD team. She's got a strong rapport with Fitz and helped nurse him back to stability. Extremely wary of all alien entities, she was dramatically absorbed by a Kree monolith in the season finale.

LEO FITZ IAIN DE CAESTECKER

The SHIELD team engineering and weapons technology specialist, Fitz had a crush on Simmons but forgot all about it due to his brain injury. Now back to normal, he's working every lead in season three to find lost Simmons.

MELINDA MAY MING-NA WEN

The badass pilot and weapons expert of Coulson's SHIELD. His second-in-command, she's the mama bear to the team. At season's end, May decides to try again with her ex, Andrew, and takes a break from SHIELD. Will she return?

DAISY "SKYE" JOHNSON/QUAKE CHLOE BENNET

Coulson's recruit who is eventually revealed to have Inhuman abilities. In the season finale, she rejects her war-mongering mother, Jiaying, and joins Coulson's team of gifted people (Secret Warriors) seeking more of her kind.

PHIL COULSON CLARK GREGG

The director of Nick Fury's rebooted SHIELD who is rebuilding the organisation with a small trusted team. Coulson lost his hand in the season finale, and now he's got a robot one! New mission: find Inhumans born of the Terrigen leak.

LANCE HUNTER NICK BLOOD

A Special Air Service (SAS) lieutenant who turned merc then joined Coulson's post-Hydra SHIELD as an agent. Was married to Agent Morse and they still have some sassy chemistry – and an upcoming spin-off series, *Marvel's Most Wanted*.

her Inhuman mother, Jiaying, for SHIELD while Grant Ward (Brett Dalton) took over the leadership of Hydra with the intent to wipe out SHIELD. Coulson, meanwhile, lost his hand to the fight against evil. His hand! The poor guy has already been killed by Loki, brought back with an alien drug and almost deposed by a rival shadow SHIELD. Will he catch a break (aside from his cool robotic hand) in season three?

Showrunners Whedon and Tancharoen say don't count on it. The new season will launch quite some time after the events of the finale, but little will be resolved. "With each season we do leave you with a cliffhanger and basically present the problem for the next season," Tancharoen explains. "Terrigen is out in the ecosystem, so will Inhumans be popping up everywhere? And what does that mean for our team?"

"What we're trying to do is take that as a seed notion," says Whedon, "and explore what would happen. What action-packed or emotional things could be generated just from that notion? What would the ripple effect be for our characters?"



"We also explore that problem thematically," Tancharoen adds. "The question of what it means to be Inhuman and all aspects of that word. We can dive into that question with each character. Daisy is an actual Inhuman, so how does she now function in the world? Coulson has taken quite a journey and now not only does he have alien DNA in his system, he was brought back from the dead and he's now

missing a hand. And then how does our whole team feel about their humanity with all these other people with gifts popping up?"

As to just how many Inhumans will be flooding the series, Whedon says it will be a steady roll out. "We will not come into the season with Inhumans everywhere," he laughs. "We'll take it slow to respect what was already established, but also because Skye/Daisy had



**ALFONSO
"MACK"
MACKENZIE**
HENRY SIMMONS

Another member of the "Real SHIELD", Mack isn't fond of aliens or Inhumans after being mind-controlled by Kree tech. Coulson has paired him with Daisy in season three so expect a "Mulder/Scully vibe".

**LINCOLN
CAMPBELL/
SPARKPLUG**
LUKE MITCHELL

An Inhuman who can control electric charges and a great help to Daisy. He was influenced by the Inhuman Elders, who proved to be evil, and now he's going to be soul-searching his place among the gifted.

a year and a half origin story that landed so hard and hit you right in the heart because of the time you spent with her on the journey."

"Her process of coming to terms with being an Inhuman is not easy," Tancharoen continues. "So we will take our time to look into what kind of journey it is for each individual."

LOST CONNECTIONS

In the meantime, Coulson will continue to move SHIELD and their new directives forward.

"When we first met Coulson, he prided himself on being the everyman," Tancharoen explains. "He was on the ground, relating to people, helping them through whatever transition they may be going through. But the more he changes, the more he might feel like he's losing touch with being that everyman."

"He may try to reconnect on a human level with people around him," Whedon continues. "And then on a general level, Coulson's job has been very reactionary. He can't possibly anticipate the things happening and [the

Inhumans] is again a situation where he was trying to get ahead of it. He said at the end of last year, 'Let's put a team together because we're going to need it.' But he didn't have a chance to do that before a new curveball hit. What we'll see this year is him trying to get ahead of it and anticipate just how drastic everything will be. It makes him more of a hard-core thinker and more cutthroat."

And that's a good state of mind to be in because the showrunners are throwing him a new adversary in actress Constance Zimmer, who will play the head of a new anti-Inhuman organisation known as the Advanced Threat Containment Unit. "With Constance's character, we've given Coulson an equal foil on the turf he's used to playing on," Whedon teases.

Plus there is former SHIELD member Ward hovering and ready to pounce as the new vanguard of Hydra. Tancharoen says they're going to explore "the aspect of inhumanity in Ward and what it means to possibly just be evil."

Ward's done some dirty deeds over two seasons, but we haven't seen him be truly evil just yet. Is his descent into darkness upon us?

"I think that duality is always there," Whedon offers. "Ward is the hero of his own story. We love the debate amongst fans about whether they hate to love him, love to hate him, or hate to hate him..."

Coulson is back – and with a cool robotic hand!



“I think Ward will always believe he is doing the right thing”

"Or whether he's even a villain," Tancharoen interjects. "The fact that's even in question, hopefully, means we are telling his story well."

"If he embraces certain aspects of his personality or not, is yet to be seen," Whedon continues. "But I think, forever, Ward will always believe he is doing the right thing."

And as to the spin-off series recently picked up featuring Bobbi "Mockingbird" Morse and her ex Lance Hunter, the showrunners won't confirm if that show – *Marvel's Most Wanted* – will launch in an episode of their series. Until that's announced, Tancharoen says the duo is "very much a part of our ensemble. We knew that series was a possibility going into this season but they are a part of the team and we'll see how it all plays out." ●

Agents Of SHIELD airs on ABC in the US, and will air on Channel 4 in the UK.



The citizens of Gotham should increase their life insurance and double deadbolt the doors – the legendary city’s criminal element is hell-bent on letting chaos reign this year. Season two of Bat-

prequel *Gotham* sees future supervillains Oswald Cobblepot and Edward Nygma continuing their malevolent ascent – abetted by such new-yet-familiar threats as Mr Freeze, Firefly and, possibly, a certain clown prince of crime – while the forces of good, led by Detective Jim Gordon, try to muster a united front against the ever growing rogues’ gallery.

Executive producer John Stephens tells *SFX* that the bad guys have the upper hand this year as new apex villain Theo Galavan (James Frain) comes to play. “We have created a hierarchy where there is one principal villain whose story we watch over the course of the year as he interacts with all of our villains and heroes.” Galavan is a billionaire industrialist with a specific agenda and has a lethal enforcer in the form of his sister, Tabitha Galavan (Jessica Lucas), aka Tigress.

So where does that leave Oswald Cobblepot, who we saw scheming and crawling his way to the top of the criminal heap at the end of season one? With a smile, Stephens offers, “One of the ways we love Cobblepot – and

what Robin [Lord Taylor] plays so well – is when he is on top but then gets knocked down and is under someone’s power for a while, like when he was conniving against both Fish and Falcone last year. So you’ll see him start the year as King of Gotham, but he gets knocked down and has to scramble through pain and real-world obstacles.”

Galavan’s dark machinations will fire much of the season’s story engine. And Stephens promises this year’s run of adventures will be more focused and less procedural than the first season. “The show this year is fully serialised. We were finding our way last year and pinpointing what worked, identifying where the show was most alive and connecting with audiences. This season we are airing 11 straight [episodes] in the fall and 11 straight in the spring, but we broke it out as one complete season with one overarching storyline which is defined by the emotional journeys of Gordon and Bruce throughout the year. We’ll have a Firefly block or a Mr Freeze block but those stories play into the overarching saga story so nothing feels standalone this year.”

Jim Gordon in particular will be experiencing his own dark night of the soul after his by-the-book approach last year crashed and burned around him. In Commissioner Loeb’s black books for →

Gordon fights for the city’s soul in *GOTHAM* season two – and might just lose his own... Tara Bennett is in the shadow of the Bat

HEARTS of DARK

NESS

With all that villainy, Oswald Cobblepot needs a sit-down.

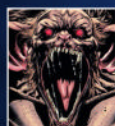
THE YOUNG ONES Will these classic Bat-foes menace Gotham?

BANE



→ Given his childhood was spent incarcerated in a Caribbean hellhole, it's hard to imagine how this jacked-up bruiser could cross paths with the young Bruce. Maybe Wayne visits him on a philanthropic trip to Pena Duro prison?

MAN-BAT



→ Boffin-turned-beast Kirk Langstrom may be a tad too weirdsville for *Gotham* – and face it, Boy-Bat is hardly a name to strike fear

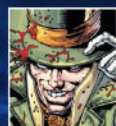
into the soul... But what if Bruce encounters him as a young research student?

RA'S AL GHUL



→ *Arrow's* already staked a claim to the leader of the League of Assassins, but there's potential in using him as the Dark Alfred, a shadowy, all-too-persuasive father figure for Bruce.

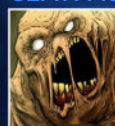
MAD HATTER



→ Tipped to appear in season two, we can see the young Jervis Tetch as a hat-

obsessed scenester, running a Lewis Carroll-themed coffee bar in Gotham's boho district. Maybe one too many cracks about his hipster headwear turns him to a life of crime.

CLAYFACE



→ Also rumoured to pop up this year, the original Clayface was a horror movie icon driven criminally insane when he heard they were remaking the classic chiller he'd starred in. Someone needs to cast Robert Englund in this role immediately.

putting Falcone in retirement, Gordon now realises he must edge towards partner Harvey Bullock's roughhouse, morally compromised style of policing to get anything done in the city. It begins a journey into darkness for Gordon, Stephens explains.

"Our ethos this season is that we take the spectrum from light to dark. We want to see how far we can push everybody into the darkness and still bring them out. And then see who stays in the darkness. There's Barbara, for example, who went from a law-abiding member of society last year to a psychotic villainess this year where she's wildly homicidal.

Watching people make those switches is fascinating. With Gordon, I think you can take him pretty dark because at the end of the day he will always be a hero. All of his choices are for the good of the city. They are never

self-serving, unlike a villain. You know his intention is a good one – which is often how things frequently become disastrous."

GORDON'S ALERT

So who will be key in dragging Gordon to a dark place? Stephens tells us it's actually a "big soup" of enablers. "Barbara has a big impact on him. And the choices and deals he makes with Cobblepot at the beginning of the year also make an incredible impact and are a tidal pull. Theo Galavan and Gordon also make deals with one another and those pull him under. And then the desire to protect the people that he cares about – Bruce, Thompkins and Bullock – also forces him into the darkness."

Initially Gordon will have a new advocate for justice in the form of Captain Nathaniel Barnes, played by *The Shield's* Michael Chiklis. "He comes in as a new force in the GCPD," Stephens reveals. "Barnes is this tough ex-soldier who Gordon has a lot of sympathy and affinity with. But as Gordon goes down this

“We want to see how far we can push everybody into the darkness”

dark road, Barnes will at first be his ally and then question his choices. They will be at loggerheads and come into conflict with one another. It's great because Chiklis brings a lot of presence and weight to the role."

Also stepping up will be the young Bruce Wayne. Stephens reveals the future Dark Knight will be more proactive in moving towards his destiny – and not only because he now has access to his father's secret cave. "He is much more active than he was last year. Part of it is that David is a half foot taller and we're literally seeing him becoming a man so we are writing to that as well. But we are always reminding

Barbara (Erin Richards): likes elbowing text.

Young Bruce discovers a cave like no other.

Selina Kyle will be on mentoring Firefly duty.

Are we sensing a purple vibe here?

Don't try and out-stare Captain Nathaniel Barnes.

ourselves that this is not just a 14-year-old boy, but the boy who will become Batman. So we can put him in these situations where he can act more heroically and more courageously and the audience goes with you because the audience knows the end point." Stephens adds that Alfred and Lucius Fox will also be a lot more active as they assume field roles.

While Jada Pinkett Smith's exit last year saw the series lose the seemingly crucial character of underworld queen Fish Mooney, Stephens says they are proud of the addition of several strong female characters to the ensemble. For Bruce, Silver St Cloud (Natalie Alyn Lind) will represent the young man's first possible romance – and so much more.

"She comes in as the niece of Theo Galavan. That story is about the choices that Bruce will end up having to make as Batman. At the end of the day, he's choosing a certain life and that means saying no to all things normal. Silver will represent the possibility of this shining, normal life he could have. But then we discover she is not the person she initially appears to be.

You can play against the dualities and ask, 'Is the real person the one with the mask or the person under the mask?' Bruce is put in a position where he has to ask who he trusts."

CHANGING SEX

Gotham's second season will also bring us the DC character Firefly, played by actress Michelle Veintimilla – a surprise for fans of the comic book canon. "Firefly was always a male character," Stephens explains, "so we gender switched it and took it back to a proto-Firefly where the origins of that character would come out. The initial conception [of the character] was almost as a Victorian matchstick girl. She was held prisoner by her family and has zero sense of agency. But she is a childhood friend of Selina Kyle, who is all choice, all agency and all personal power. Selina doesn't let anybody have any hold on her, even to the point of pushing away friendship from Bruce, because that would imply obligation. So Selina guides this young girl to become Firefly and embrace her own power, which of course goes out of control at some point."

And then, of course, there's Jerome, the rictus-grinning carnage worker played by Cameron Monaghan, first encountered in season one's "The Blind Fortune Teller" – surely a shoe-in for the future Joker? Stephens remains tight-lipped on this particular plot twist. But that may just be homicidal laughter we hear in the distance...

Heading back to the writers' room, Stephens is clearly excited for fans to see what awaits the city of the Bat. "We're all proud of it," he shares, as darkness starts to fall upon Jim Gordon's city. There goes the neighbourhood... ●

Gotham is now airing on Fox in the US, and will come to Channel 5 in the UK in 2016.



TRUE DETECTIVE

BEN MCKENZIE takes Jim Gordon to the dark side

After a first season filled with hard knocks, where do we find Gordon now?

→ We pick up season two with a reversal of fortune. Young Mr Cobblepot is the king of Gotham and Mr Gordon is the lowest he's ever been. He's been punished by Commissioner Loeb for saving Falcone's life and foiling his plan, so he's a traffic cop and he's pretty bitter about it. But as always in *Gotham*, things change quickly and the roles are reversed yet again.

Villains are rising this season... What does that mean for Gordon?

→ These villains are more pernicious than the crime families who wanted law and order to get money. But when the wheels fall off and the true villains arise, it's anarchy. To combat that, there has to be an arms race and the good guys have to arm up and we'll get into that later in the season.

Where's the relationship between Jim and young Bruce going?

→ They were on the outs in the middle of the first season as Bruce felt betrayed by Jim for not living up to his promise of solving his parents' murder. They are slowly picking up the pieces of that. But at the same time, Bruce is not being completely honest with Jim because as he discovers this cave that his father had, he embarks on his own journey and doesn't tell Jim.

What about Jim's personal life?

→ Barbara has turned from loving partner to psychotic ex-girlfriend and she only gets crazier in season two. It puts a strain on Jim's relationship with Thompkins, one of the few people he has to confide in. But as she watches Jim get darker, she begins to question her own belief and love for the man. Can she keep him from turning all the way to the dark side? **Tara Bennett**

Brought



To Book

DAVE HUTCHINSON

How the author took over 30 years to become an overnight success

Words by Jonathan Wright /// Photography by Will Ireland

There are times when fiction seems to foreshadow events in the real world. This has happened with Dave Hutchinson's *Fractured Europe* sequence, which imagines a continent 50-70 years hence where free movement across borders is a distant dream and "Europe is balkanising itself into smaller and smaller and weirder nations."

The idea that his novels have presaged what we see on our TV screens, as desperate Syrian refugees flee civil war, and the Hungarian and Croatian authorities put up razor wire to stop them crossing the border from Serbia, gives Hutchinson little comfort.

"Events have kind of caught up with the books, and I take absolutely no pleasure from it whatsoever," he tells *SFX*. "Seriously, people are dying, people are getting hurt, their lives are being completely screwed. I'm watching the news and there are people rioting at the Hungarian border."

Yet *Europe In Autumn* and its soon-to-be-published successor, *Europe At Midnight*, which follows an English intelligence officer whose adventures take him into a parallel world, were never especially intended as political novels. Rather, says Hutchinson, he started out wanting to write "an entertainment" that made "a few satirical points" about why the Schengen Zone is "a historical blip" that won't last into the next century.

He also wanted to write an exciting espionage thriller. "I've probably read more spy fiction than I have science fiction down the years," Hutchinson says. He cites American writer Alan Furst, whose novels are set around the outbreak of World War Two, as a particular influence.

Whatever the influences that went into its creation, *Europe In Autumn*, the dystopian tale of an Estonian chef who gets mixed up with smugglers, was a slow-burn success through 2014, and was nominated for the Clarke, BSFA and John W Campbell Awards.

ON THE SHELF

"It was a big thing for me actually to get a novel sold," says Hutchinson. "It's still a big thing for me actually to go into a bookshop and see it on the shelf. I'm not used to that either."

As to why this might be such a big thing for Hutchinson personally, it helps to know a little about his biography. He's found success late, in his fifties, and grew up in the Sheffield of the 1960s and 1970s, "a kind of science fiction desert".

There were no SF writing groups to help him get started, or none he knew about. Instead, he read Asimov, Heinlein and Larry Niven before stumbling upon the work of British author Keith Roberts (1935-2000). "One day I picked up a

copy of *Pavane* [an alternate history fix-up novel that has the destruction of English protestantism as a starting point] and you could have heard my jaw drop from 20 or 30 miles away," he says. Why? Because Roberts wrote about English landscapes and people.

The kind of people you'd meet in Sheffield? "Yeah, people who lived on your street rather than piloted mile-long space vessels and blew up stars," he says. "Not that I've got anything against that."

Thus inspired, he started out as a writer in the late 1970s, and published four volumes of SFF short stories by the time he was 21. Then, around the time he went to university, he found himself with nothing to say as a writer.

"I just dried up," he says. "I'm terrified it's going to happen to me again." Instead of forging a career as a novelist, he worked as a journalist.

Seen against this backdrop, the ever-so subtle name change for his later work is revealing. "I made a conscious decision to [differentiate] because there's an early period and there's the rest," he says. "I'm not ashamed of any of [my early work], although I do look back and occasionally cringe, but it's done and I'm not sorry I did it. I'm sorry I didn't keep doing it, because I might have been a little bit further ahead with my career than I am at the moment. That 10 years does bother me sometimes."

STARTING OVER

In 2010, he was made redundant and, to fill the time, took an online fiction-writing course. From this came a short story, "The Incredible Exploding Man". "The first draft was really terrible, but we kicked it about a bit and rewrote it, and it was a bit better," he says.

Hutchinson is probably being a little modest here. After his decade away, he'd gone back to writing short fiction, and even a novel, *The Villages* (2001). His 2009 novella *The Push* was nominated for a BSFA Award. Nevertheless, "Exploding Man" is important because editor Ian Whates picked it up for the first *Solaris Rising* collection, where it sat in the company of Alastair Reynolds, Pat Cadigan and Ian McDonald. The connection with *Solaris*, publishers of the *Fractured Europe* sequence, was made.

Today, he's one of *Solaris*'s biggest names. He's working on what he says will be the final *Fractured Europe* book. It's been tough going, but he's optimistic he'll hit a November deadline: "I actually worked out what the plot was last week..." ●

Europe At Midnight is published by *Solaris* on 5 November.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Novelist

Born

→ 1960

From

→ Sheffield

Greatest Hits

→ The *Fractured Europe* sequence has transformed the standing of Hutchinson, hitherto an admired short story writer, within SF.

Random Fact

→ *Europe At Midnight* features a character called Rupert of Hentzau, the name of a villainous noble from Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner Of Zenda*.



“EVENTS HAVE
CAUGHT UP
WITH THE
BOOKS AND
I TAKE NO
PLEASURE
FROM IT”

DAN DARE



DAN DARE, COMMANDER MONDAY AND HIS MEN ARE TRAPPED INSIDE THE MIND OF THE BIOGS' LIVING SPACE SHIP. THE MIND OFFERS DARE A STRANGE BARGAIN... TO WHICH HE AGREES!

HEAR ME, MIND OF THE SHIP! GIVE ME EVERLASTING LIFE AND I WILL BETRAY MY COMRADES!

DAN DARE's 1970s resurrection in 2000 AD may not have been a complete success but, says Stephen Jewell, it's definitely worth another look

“**T**here are many elements of story and art that could feature today, but not that bloody power-hand!”

Veteran comics writer Pat Mills is reflecting on the much-maligned Dan Dare revival of the late '70s.

Mostly drawn by the late Massimo Belardinelli and *Watchmen* artist Dave Gibbons, the frequently lacklustre scripts often didn't do justice to the striking illustrations. Now, after an agreement has finally been reached with rights-holders The Dan Dare Corporation, the Pilot of the Future is set to soar the spaceways once again in a new, two-volume hardback collection, the last of 2000 AD's vintage strips to be reprinted.

“I think the art's red hot,” Mills tells *SFX*. “It stands up as being of its time, and is what the French call ‘classic’.”

Described as “Biggles in Space”, Dan Dare was created by Frank Hampson in 1950 as Britain's answer to Buck Rogers and his adventures were serialised in *Eagle* comic until its cancellation in 1967. In need of a space hero to headline the new science fiction comic he was developing for IPC in 1976, Mills concluded that Dan Dare was ripe for a reboot. Determined to produce a strip that would better fit 2000

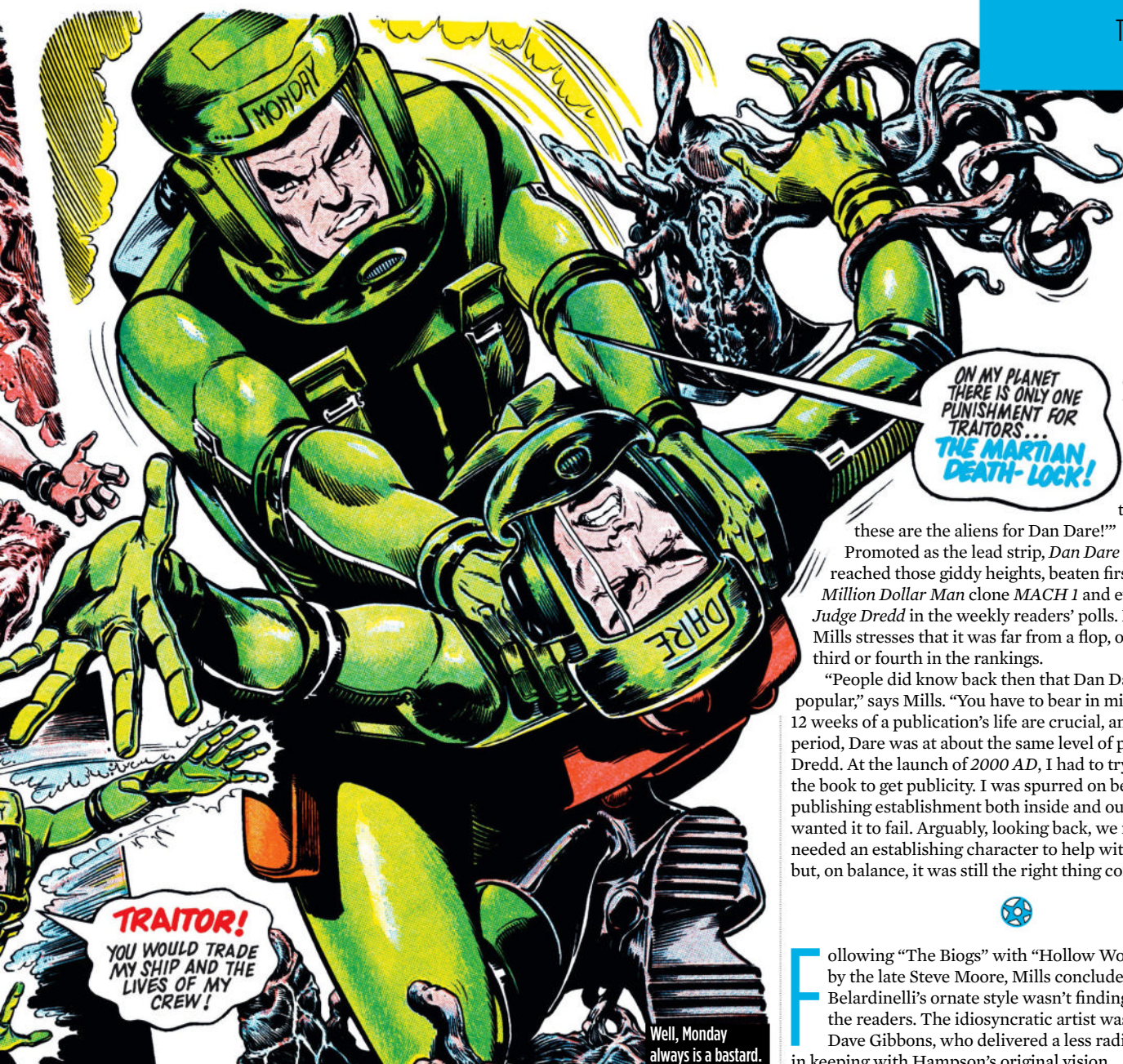
AD's punk rock-inspired rebellious spirit, he was told to ignore the old fans by publisher John Sanders.

After unsuccessfully auditioning some Argentinian and Italian artists, Mills eventually settled on Belardinelli, who had submitted some speculative art samples. Known for his far-out compositions and phantasmagoric designs, the Dan Dare that took prime position in the centrespread of 2000 AD Prog #1 in February 1977 bore little resemblance to Frank Hampson's original, clean-cut, square-jawed Space Fleet Colonel.

“Commercially, it was the right thing to do because I had to desperately compensate for our poor quality paper, as science fiction had always previously appeared on glossy paper,” says Mills, who originally planned for web offset printing but had to settle for the more rudimentary pulp letterpress. “But Belardinelli achieved the impossible, he made it look almost luxuriant.”

While '70s Dare was very different visually to his '50s forebear, opening storyline “The Biogs” – which Mills co-wrote with Kelvin Gosnell – actually emulated his first *Eagle* adventure. “In the original Hampson story, Dare goes to Venus to solve a mystery, and in our story, he goes to Jupiter to solve a mystery,” says Mills, who came up with the grisly Biogs after reading an article in *National*

Dan hadn't aged a bit in his ten-year “sabbatical”.



Geographic. "There were some revolting bed bugs featured in there and I thought 'yes,

these are the aliens for Dan Dare!"

Promoted as the lead strip, *Dan Dare* never quite reached those giddy heights, beaten first by *Six Million Dollar Man* clone *MACH 1* and eventually *Judge Dredd* in the weekly readers' polls. However, Mills stresses that it was far from a flop, often coming third or fourth in the rankings.

"People did know back then that Dan Dare was popular," says Mills. "You have to bear in mind that the first 12 weeks of a publication's life are crucial, and during that period, Dare was at about the same level of popularity as Dredd. At the launch of *2000 AD*, I had to try every trick in the book to get publicity. I was spurred on because the publishing establishment both inside and outside IPC wanted it to fail. Arguably, looking back, we may not have needed an establishing character to help with the launch but, on balance, it was still the right thing commercially."



Following "The Biogs" with "Hollow World", scripted by the late Steve Moore, Mills concluded that Belardinelli's ornate style wasn't finding favour with the readers. The idiosyncratic artist was replaced by Dave Gibbons, who delivered a less radical Dare more in keeping with Hampson's original vision.

"Belardinelli's art was quite sophisticated," Gibbons tells *SFX*. "I really liked its gnarly, hallucinatory quality. But when you've got a very strong drawing style like that, it's sometimes hard to break through to the story. I always make the story very clear. Perhaps people sometimes want me to put more detail in but all I've ever wanted to do with my art is to tell the story well. Maybe with an artist like Belardinelli, it's more his rendering style that people find attractive than the actual storytelling, which is what they found in the early days of *2000 AD*. Although on the face of it, *Dan Dare* should have been a huge hit, a lot of people couldn't get into the story because they got put off by the surface of it." →



“The Star Wars explosion meant that people got interested in Dan Dare”

As a child growing up in London, Gibbons was an avid fan of *Eagle* and couldn't wait to catch up with his weekly dose of *Dan Dare*. “It was my favourite thing,” he recalls. “I have happy memories of going to the newsagent, buying the latest copy of *Eagle* and just sitting there in the sunshine, reading *Dan Dare* over and over again.”

Having started out as a professional artist at DC Thomson and IPC in the early 1970s, Gibbons hoped that he would land the coveted assignment of *Dan Dare* when *2000 AD* first launched. Instead he was offered future-sport story *Harlem Heroes*.

“When I heard that Dan Dare was coming back to *2000 AD*, I thought, ‘Ooh, I wonder if I could have something to do with that,’ but I couldn't because they'd already given it to Belardinelli. But after Belardinelli's version turned out to be a bit too far out for people, they decided that they were going to do a much more down to earth Dan Dare. They then offered it to me, and I was thrilled. So I went away and drew loads of sketches and came up with some storylines that involved the Mekon and the Treens, only for them to say, ‘Sorry, the *Dare* scripts have already been written.’”

Scripted by Gerry Finley Day and Jack Adrian (aka Chris Lowder), “The Lost Worlds” began in September 1977's Prog #28. It started out emulating *Star Trek* as Dare and his shipmates embarked upon a seemingly open-ended deep space mission. “There was a space fort, and Dare was like the leader of the Dirty Dozen,” recalls Gibbons, who had a lot of fun drawing his more rough and ready crewmates. “You had Dan, who was super smooth with slicked back hair, and then you had Hitman, who Belardinelli would have made a good job of with his gnarly hand with a gun fused to it, while Bear was a very stolid Russian soldier.”



With the release of *Star Wars* that same year proving to be such a defining moment in cinema history (although it didn't open in Britain till the very end of the year), “The Lost Worlds” abruptly changed tack with Prog #36's “Star Slayer”, as Dare and his shipmates suddenly became freedom fighters as they confronted the evil Star Slayer Empire. “I was there for the *Star Wars* explosion, which meant that people got very interested in Dan Dare,” says Gibbons. “We were able to hit on similar themes, which I suppose felt current at the time.”



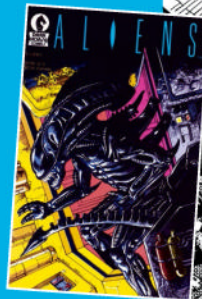
DAN DARE VS ALIENS!

Dave Gibbons on the crossover that never was

→ “I was at my local comic shop one day and the guy there said, ‘Dave, I’ve had a great idea for a crossover! You’ve just written *Batman Versus Predator*, so how about *Dan Dare/Aliens*?’”

“I got this picture in my head of Dan and Digby on a space station in their bright costumes, coming around the corner of a corridor and there’s this huge, disgusting alien, absolutely drooling. Digby says in his Lancashire voice, ‘Eh, up, Colonel Dan! Looks like something out of yon American horror comics!’ because *Eagle* was designed specifically to counter American horror comics. I would have done *Dan Dare* exactly like Frank Hampson’s *Dan Dare*, but not to be all ironic.”

“I quickly came up with a story and Dark Horse Comics, who own the *Alien* comics licence, were up for it. But when I got in touch with The Dan Dare Corporation, they weren’t interested. But I’d still like to do it as a 48-page one-off, and I’ve got a perfect artist in mind, so watch this space!”



STORY: TOM TULLY * ART: DAVE GIBBONS

After “The Lost Worlds” concluded with Prog #85, Dan Dare was rested for three months before making another comeback in the landmark *2000 AD* Prog #100. Now written by Tom Tully, “Servant Of Evil” saw the long-awaited return of the Mekon and the Treens. Given a superhero-style costume and lumbered with that dreaded power-hand, an amnesiac Dare is brainwashed into becoming a stooge for his old enemy. “Tom knew how to do a cliffhanger, and I used to find his scripts a little more polished than Gerry’s,” says Gibbons. “But even though it had a lot of elements that I quite liked, it really didn’t set me on fire. I was so loyal to Dan Dare that I kept trying to get it right, but I don’t think we actually did that with *2000 AD*.”

Desperate to clear his name, Dan Dare came to an abrupt end with Prog #126’s ominously titled “Traitor” in August 1979. “It was one of those potboiling stories that we could have ended in an episode or two,” recalls Gibbons. “But I



think they just decided to completely change the comic. Dan Dare basically wanders around space, so they let him wander around space some more."

But while his last *2000 AD* story remains unresolved, Dan Dare found himself more at home three years later in the newly relaunched *Eagle*. Initially written by Pat Mills and John Wagner, and drawn by Gerry Embleton and Ian Kennedy, it cleaved much more closely to the traditional Dare. Since then, Grant Morrison and Rian Hughes' radically revisionist Dare was published in *Revolver* in 1990 before Virgin Comics hired Garth Ennis and Gary Erskine to helm a seven-issue miniseries in 2007, for which Gibbons was persuaded to provide a cover.

Describing it as "the missing piece from *2000 AD*", Gibbons is pleased that *Dan Dare* is finally being collected, even if he does have mixed feelings about the whole experience. "I don't have the happiest memories of doing it as far as the content is concerned, but it was a time in my career when I had a lot of energy," he says. "I would take on anything, and even if I had what I thought was a bad script, I'd try and draw the hell out of it."

Much to his surprise, Gibbons has even provided a brand new cover. "I really enjoyed getting to draw Dan Dare again and also the space fort, and I've put a few Belardinelli elements in there as well," he says. "It's nice because in the past, a comic was in the newsagent's for a week and then it was gone forever. So the fact that Dan Dare is going to be a book on one of my already broken shelves is great!"

Dan Dare: The 2000 AD Years, Vol 1 is published on Thursday 5 November.

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edited by Ian Berriman

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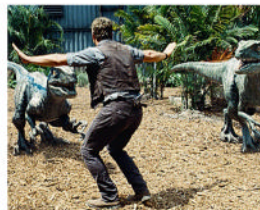
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THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS

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CINEMA

PAN

How Pan found his people



▶ **RELEASED 16 OCTOBER**

PG | 111 minutes

▶ Director Joe Wright

▶ Cast Hugh Jackman, Levi Miller, Garrett Hedlund, Rooney Mara, Adeel Akhtar, Amanda Seyfried

❖ **This isn't film or television's** first attempt to explain how that wee flying chap, Peter Pan, first set foot in Neverland (the last, by our reckoning, was the Sky miniseries *Neverland*, with Charlie Rowe in the lead role and Rhys Ifans as Hook). On top of that, there are all the adaptations of Pan's interactions with Wendy and the Darling family. The popularity of JM Barrie's alternate-universe tale has been rumbling on quite nicely since it first appeared on stage in 1904, which means that as Joe Wright's lumbering, self-aware *Pan* arrives it's hard not to feel a little... well... *bored* with the whole thing.

To counteract this inevitable weariness, Wright – working from a script by Jason Fuchs – has injected a major new element into the now somewhat stale tale: Hugh Jackman's Blackbeard, a pirate obsessed with becoming immortal, with a penchant for long (mostly amusing) speeches and all the affectations of a wicked witch from a Disney film. When he looks in a mirror, you can almost hear

him asking himself, "Who's the fairest of them all?" Whenever the film's pacing sags, you find yourself longing for a glimpse of Blackbeard, proving that Jackman was worth whatever money he asked for to play his first panto villain. From the evidence here, he should do a turn on the boards at Weston-super-Mare one Christmas; he'd bring the house down.

Sadly, this leaves the rest of the film rather lacking in oomph. Australian Levi Miller is capable enough as young Peter, although his Cockney accent does tend to wander all over the shop. The film's opening scenes – which see Peter causing a ruckus in a London orphanage during the Blitz – are notable mainly for the sight of comedian Kathy Burke stomping around as an angry nun, and some glorious touches that remain curiously unexplained, such as an all-female RAF command team with identical hairdos (hopefully they'll pop up again if *Pan* gets a sequel – the film practically screams "Join us for *Pan 2!*" when it ends).

After this, the action moves to Neverland, as Peter's kidnapped by pirates and forced to work in Blackbeard's mines to find fairy dust. The use of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" to greet his arrival, yodelled by crowds of



"Hmmm. It's either a map or a crusty old bedsheet."



You should see the giant arse he has at the back of the ship.

singing slaves, has to be Pan's most audacious moment, turning an ordinary fantasy for kids into a pre-pubescent *Mad Max: Fury Road* – it's genuinely mind-boggling. But nothing quite lives up to this scene, and the rest of the film, while visually stunning (galleons sailing through the air; giant caves of crystal; killer mega-birds made from feathers and skeletons; an absolutely bloody *enormous* crocodile) soon descends into a formulaic chase flick that relies way too heavily on some poorly-realised characters.

The biggest misfire is probably

“One or two moments recapture that original magic”

Garrett Hedlund as a young, not-yet-a-baddie, two-handed James Hook – only he seems to be playing Han Solo, who somewhere along the way has also been crossed with Brendan Fraser in



The Mummy, and then crossed once more with the Marlboro Man (minus cigarettes). While Peter's accent might wobble, Hook's American drawl is so over-enunciated and strident that he sounds as though he's playing a parody of a Yank – and given that Hedlund's actually from Minnesota, this is rather puzzling. The other downside of Hook is his ill-advised flirtation with Tiger Lily, a romantic subtext that's not only a bit creepy given his oily attempts at flirting, but also disappointing... as is Tiger Lily herself.

Much has been written about the casting of Rooney Mara as a character who, if you use Barrie's books as a guide, should have Native American attributes. And yes, while Tiger Lily's tribe here is pleasingly racially diverse, she's emphatically *not*. Her people are repeatedly referred to as "savages" by Blackbeard, but Tiger Lily looks as though she's just been shopping in Chelsea and used a little too much red eyeshadow that morning. The biggest crime, though, is that Mara looks so unrelentingly bored during the entire film, particularly in her

fight scenes (you suspect even Kathy Burke's nun might've given those fights more energy). What a shame she's so horrendously out of place here.

So *Pan* does have its problems. But, while we may be a little weary of Peter Pan in general these days, there are one or two moments here which successfully recapture that original magic and deliver it to a younger, less jaded audience. These, at least, make it well worth a watch. **Jayne Nelson**

i Out on 15 October from Alma Classics: *The Complete Peter Pan*, containing all Barrie's Pan stories, with 42 new illustrations.

ONE-ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Hook's not the only one, you know...



TEE HEE JOHNSON

Like Captain Hook, *Live And Let Die*'s easily-amused henchman lost a hand to a crocodile. He didn't lose his sense of humour, though – well, until Bond wiped the smile off his face by chucking him out of a moving train.

TRAP JAW

Skeletor's cyborg sidekick in *He-Man* had all sorts of arm attachments, including a flamethrower, a freeze ray, a telescopic grabber, a fire extinguisher and – our favourite – a fly swatter.

CANDYMAN

Clive Barker's African-American bogeyman can be summoned by looking in a mirror and saying his name five times. Formerly a 19th century artist, he had his painting hand cut off by an angry mob for getting a white woman pregnant.

MERLE DIXON

The Walking Dead's redneck racist had to saw his own mitt off after being left handcuffed to a pipe on an Atlanta rooftop, which left him feeling pretty sore in more ways than one.



CINEMA



Mum was suspiciously friendly with Mick Hucknall.

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2

Drac's back



RELEASED 16 OCTOBER

U | 89 minutes

Director Genndy Tartakovsky

Cast Adam Sandler, Selena Gomez,

Andy Samberg, Kevin James

Back in 2012, *Hotel Transylvania* worked because the expansive animation style of director Genndy Tartakovsky fitted (and lifted) the comedy vocalisations of Adam Sandler and his usual troupe. The sequel keeps things safe, stretching little from that formula: perhaps toning the madness down very slightly, but spinning a tale about family that seems pretty pale and timid.

In this one, Dracula (Sandler) is worried that his sweet-natured,

half-vampire grandson Dennis (Asher Blinkoff) won't become a proper monster, so naturally tries to push things along – including pushing the kid from a high tower so that he'll fly.

Though it can't quite match the original for pure entertainment value, it's all perfectly silly and undemanding, and bolstered by fresh blood, including Mel Brooks as Drac's disapproving father Vlad. You might think that after *Dracula: Dead And Loving It* he'd stay away from vampire comedy like a bloodsucker avoids garlic, but Brooks delivers one of the better turns here, and the film could've used more of his well-honed talents. **James White**

The parents of Asher Blinkoff (Dennis) are both animators – his dad Saul worked on the likes of *Pocahontas* and *Mulan*.

THE LOBSTER

Animal Crackers



RELEASED 16 OCTOBER

15 | 118 minutes

Director Yorgos Lanthimos

Cast Colin Farrell, Rachel Weisz, Léa Seydoux, John C Reilly, Ben Whishaw, Ariane Labed

As science fiction fans we're used to weird worlds and strange tales, but believe us when we tell you that *The Lobster* is really weird. Imagine if George Orwell and Franz Kafka co-wrote a satire of modern dating culture and you're in the right ball park.

Colin Farrell stars as bulbous-bellied singleton David. In *The Lobster's* parallel present only couples are allowed to live in The City, while single folk are shipped off to The Hotel, where they're given 45 days to find the perfect partner or face being transformed into an animal of their choosing

(David's is a lobster, of course). To buy more time The Hotel's residents can hunt Loners, who live in the surrounding woods illegally and have committed to a life without relationships. But just like everyone else, The Loners are bound by their own authoritarian rules and regulations.

Played for deadpan laughs, *The Lobster* is riotously funny despite some hauntingly horrific twists and turns. Director Yorgos Lanthimos, making his English language debut, shines an absurdist spotlight on relationship ideals, skewering society's couple fixation. In this world a single, seemingly insignificant shared characteristic (such as the tendency to have nosebleeds) is valued above all else. This idea is flipped on its head in the woods, where anyone who can't keep their hands to themselves faces



No matter what they did, they couldn't escape Trump's hair.

brutal repercussions. It's here that David falls for Rachel Weisz's similarly short-sighted woman.

Farrell is great value as David, a sad-sack romantic in a world gone mad, while *The Hotel's* lovelorn residents (among them Ben Whishaw and John C Reilly), Olivia Colman's mad hotel manager and Léa Seydoux's uncompromising Loner leader all

offer memorable supporting turns. The humour won't be to everyone's taste and there's no denying that the film overstays its welcome, but *The Lobster* proves an entertaining and peculiar dystopian drama – a dish everyone should try once. **Jordan Farley**

David is the only named character. Everyone else goes by the likes of "Biscuit Woman" and "Lisping Man".



Developers had ruined Tatooine.

MAZE RUNNER: THE SCORCH TRIALS

No rest for the WCKD

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 131 minutes

▶ Director Wes Ball

▶ Cast Dylan O'Brien, Kaya Scodelario, Thomas Brodie-Sangster

◆ **"The Maze is one thing,"** slurs Aidan Gillen's Janson, "but you kids wouldn't last a day out in the Scooorch."

He's not totally wrong: the huge labyrinth of last year's *The Maze Runner* – where a group of amnesiac boys (and girl) found themselves trapped – is gone. In its place is... well, everything. Sequel *The Scorch Trials* abandons its USP altogether – boldly opening up, for better and for worse, into something entirely different.

It picks up right where we left off: with Thomas (Dylan O'Brien), Teresa (Kaya Scodelario) and the other "Gladers" on the run from WCKD (World Catastrophe Killzone Department). Having escaped their lab, they venture out into a post-apocalyptic world ravaged by solar flares: where

cities are now ruins in the desert, and a disease has rendered most of the population berserk, screaming zombies. This is the sprawling Scorch, and it looks beautiful.

Free of the Maze's claustrophobia, director Wes Ball runs wild; there's barely a sequence here lacking style or imagination. The action scenes, too, are urgent and masterfully paced; especially one involving a zombie attack in a mall. Compared to other YA efforts, this is far more grim and gory.

Even so, such momentum works hard to mask a flimsy, unfocused script. Action is one thing, but the film also needs a better-developed sense of mystery – as well as a deeper exploration of character relationships and a wit that goes beyond tired lines like, "well, that doesn't sound good." When the dust settles *The Scorch Trials* is, as we're repeatedly told of WCKD, "good" – just not as good as you want it to be. **Stephen Kelly**

i Want your name in the next book? Enter this competition by 19 October and you might: <http://bit.ly/scorchmaze>.



"I asked for two sugars, asshole!"

SOLACE

Sixth sense plus *Seven*

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 101 minutes

▶ Director Afonso Poyart

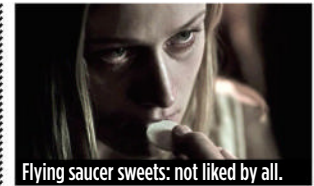
▶ Cast Colin Farrell, Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Anthony Hopkins

◆ **Any film in which an FBI agent asks Anthony Hopkins to help him track down a serial killer isn't so much risking comparisons to a certain 1991 Oscar grabber as virtually inviting them.** Hold the fava beans, though: Tony isn't a cannibal this time around, but a resting clairvoyant whose psychic powers are the only thing that stands between a psycho who offs terminal cases and his next unwitting victim.

Next is the key word there, both Hopkins and his quarry having the same future-foreseeing abilities as Nicolas Cage had back in 2007. Or should that be *Seven*? Quite possibly, given Colin Farrell's mercy-murderer sharing John Doe's penchant for an artfully composed crime scene. Throw in Abbie Cornish as a stern Clarice-alike and some *Matrix*-aping slo-mo and you're left with a *Solace* with a hefty quantum of baggage. Did nobody ever tell director Afonso Poyart it's impolite to steal?

Hopkins, at least, is in on the heist, breezing through it all with tongue firmly planted in cheek. He, alas, is all that's propping up this derivative grab-bag of gotcha shocks, it-was-only-a-premonition cheats and preposterously Sherlock-ian acts of instant deductive reasoning. **Neil Smith**

i At one stage *Solace* was planned as a *Seven* sequel, and rewritten to include Morgan Freeman's detective.



Flying saucer sweets: not liked by all.

THE VATICAN TAPES

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 30 OCTOBER**

15 | 89 minutes

◆ **The misshapen offspring of *The Exorcist* and *The Omen*, *The Vatican Tapes* sees a couple of priests square off against the forces of evil in a battle for the soul of an innocent-faced twentysomething (and the world).**

Among the dustiest of clichés, there are approximately two inventive scares – but that's really not enough to excuse the rest of this borefest. The really scary thing is that director Mark Neveldine was half of the team behind *Crank*. What the hell happened? **Sarah Dobbs**

ALSO+OUT



Four more films to tell you about, all released during the lifespan of this issue, but which we weren't able to see before going to press. Guillermo del Toro's gothic horror **CRIMSON PEAK** (16 October, above) is one of them. So's **THE LAST WITCH HUNTER** (23 October); set in modern-day New York, it sees Vin Diesel battle... well, have a guess. We're still hoping Christoph Waltz will turn around in a chair holding a white cat when **SPECTRE** hits on 26 October. Finally, 6 November brings us self-explanatory horror-comedy **SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**.

JURASSIC WORLD

Trevorrow Land

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 OCTOBER**

2015 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD/Download

▶ Director Colin Trevorrow

▶ Cast Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Vincent D'Onofrio, Ty Simpkins

◆ **The fourth film in the long** -dormant dino franchise has a signature image: a bored teenage boy in the theme park's viewing gallery on the phone to his girlfriend while a Tyrannosaurus rex hollers in the background.

It's 22 years on from the opening of the original *Jurassic Park*, and John Hammond's lab-birthing dinosaurs have lost much of their gawp value. "These days, kids look at a Stegosaurus like an elephant from the city zoo," explains stiff-collared operations manager Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard). So the pressure is on to give people an extra incentive to book their ticket to Isla Nublar. The answer: the Indominus rex, a laboratory-concocted dino cooked up to be bigger, nastier and hungrier than even its Tyrannosaurus cousin – a greatest hits DNA package of all the park's deadliest attractions.

There's a pleasingly meta

parallel between the theme park's need to give its visitors a new centrepiece after 22 years and the franchise's need to offer up something fresh and vital after 14 years' absence. *Jurassic Park* wowed the world in 1993, but by *Jurassic Park III*, CG-ed dinosaurs were greeted with more of a collective shrug than a jaw-drop. Universal then was faced with exactly the same dilemma as the owners of (a now renamed) Jurassic World.

So while the previous Jurassic Parks were proper dino-ensembles, there's little room for any other species (bar the marquee-friendly Raptors) in this new movie.

It's a questionable move. The appeal of the original *Jurassic Park* was that it breathed life into creatures that genuinely once roamed the planet, giving us a vivid evocation of our prehistoric past. But as soon as you create your own hybrid dinosaur you might as well be making *Godzilla*. Even the script seems to blast itself when Jake Johnson's old-time Jurassic Park fanboy Lowery says, "That first park was legit! They didn't need these genetic hybrids, you just need dinosaurs, real dinosaurs!"



As belches go it was a cracker.



Fogle and Humble knew this was an episode of *Animal Park* like no other.

Writer/director Colin Trevorrow seems similarly starry-eyed about that first movie. There are numerous little kisses to Spielberg's 1993 original, from Lowery's Jurassic Park T-shirt to the return of Dr Henry Wu. Spielberg is on executive producer duties, and it must have been quite a feeling to be told, in a roundabout way, how great you are every time you view the dailies.

Sadly, Trevorrow doesn't quite have his hero's knack with luminous characterisation. When Joss Whedon dived in after a clip of Dearing's first meeting with

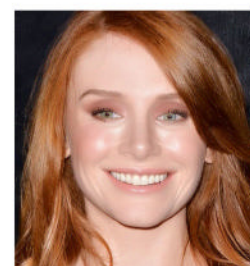
“There are numerous little kisses to Spielberg's original”

Chris Pratt's Raptor-whisperer Owen Grady was released online, calling it “'70s-era sexist. She's a stiff, he's a life-force,” he hit the bullseye. While the second-tier characters have colour and



BRYCE DALLAS HOWARD

Claire Dearing in *Jurassic World*



What are your memories of the original movie?

→ It was nothing short of a profound experience for me. I just remember seeing the dinosaurs and thinking to myself, "I don't even comprehend what my eyes are seeing. These are real!"

Jurassic World is a parable of technology running amok. How do you feel about the real-world parallels?

→ The advancement of technology is thrilling. But we also have to be careful that we don't develop this myopic perspective where we don't see these advancements in a larger context.

How did you end up wearing high heels for most of the movie?

→ When I was with the costume designer, I said, "Don't you think that my character should have boots? We can make it sleek-looking, and then when I'm in the jungle, I'll still have the boots?" He was like, "No, you'll look way too protected." I'm like, "That's sort of what I'm looking for – protecting myself!" But it all worked out in the end. I learned a lot of ankle-strengthening exercises, and I ran through the jungle in heels. **Richard Edwards**

freshness (Johnson has a sweet double-act with Lauren Lapkus as fellow employee Vivian Krill), Trevorrow has trouble fleshing out his two leads beyond a thumbnail-sized stereotype. Owen tells Claire off for screaming and scolds her for wearing high heels; she doesn't know how to talk to her own nephews and calls dinosaurs "assets". It's a shame that the movie doesn't let Chris Pratt be, well, Chris Pratt a bit more. If this had been Peter Quill against the dinosaurs, and Bryce Dallas Howard had been allowed a little of the survivor spirit of Laura

Dern's character in the original film, maybe it would have helped *Jurassic World's* leads not seem like such dusty anachronisms.

So where do they go from here? An army of Indominus rexes? A killer Diplodocus? As enjoyable as *Jurassic World* is, we've had our fun with gene-spliced dino mutants – let's get back to basics next time round, eh?

➔ **Extras** Thankfully, you get plenty of Chris Pratt bang for your buck in the bonuses. He and Trevorrow interview each other for the nine-minute "Chris And Colin Take On The World", where

Pratt talks about the 2009 home video of him joking about being offered *Jurassic Park IV* (catch the whole thing on YouTube).

Elsewhere, you get a couple of standard Making Of's (29 minutes/10 minutes), a Pratt-fronted tour of the movie's Innovation Centre, and six minutes' worth of inessential deleted scenes – including one where Claire has to smear dinosaur shit all over herself. There's no commentary though – boo! **Steve O'Brien**

i *The Incredibles/Tomorrowland* director Brad Bird provided the voice of the *Jurassic World* monorail announcer.

REX (3)



It was the only way to make her watch *Lost* again.

DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

- There's a dream sequence that leaves you befuddled.
- A member of The Guilty Remnant lights up.
- Kevin Garvey tries to reconnect with his son.
- An animal acts weirdly for no apparent reason.
- Somebody says "Hero Day".
- Someone shouts at a member of The Guilty Remnant and gets no reaction at all.
- Somebody looks vacant – as if they're preparing for a *Lost*-style flashback – but it's all a tease until episode nine.

THE LEFTOVERS

Season One

Sometimes They Don't Come Back

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2014 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

► Showrunner Damon Lindelof

► Cast Justin Theroux, Christopher Eccleston, Ann Dowd, Liv Tyler, Carrie Coon, Paterson Joseph

With *Lost*'s Damon Lindelof running the show, *The Leftovers* is exactly you'd expect: a slow-moving, wantonly cryptic, stylishly-shot mystery about characters who don't quite act as you'd expect them to in the bizarre situation they've been dealt.

In this case, the world is learning to cope after one tenth of the planet's population disappeared in the blink of an eye. Is it the Rapture? Is it aliens? Is it the most ambitious stunt *Jackass*

has ever pulled off? There are no answers forthcoming – in this first season, at least. That's not a spoiler. That's not a passive aggressive criticism of *Lost*'s finale. Although the characters may raise the questions themselves, *The Leftovers* isn't a show about "why?", it's a show about "what now?" How the characters cope. Or don't cope, in many cases.

Because it takes this approach, *The Leftovers* also doesn't fall into the trap of similar high-concept shows such as *Under The Dome* and *Flashforward*, where once the big special effects-driven "event" that kicks everything off has done its job, the show becomes a bit, well, dull after that. The "Rapture" is handled in a surprisingly low-key way. It's a clever move. It

immediately says, "This show isn't about spectacle, it's about people." It doesn't give the popcorn crowd a false idea of what's ahead.

And it carries on being low-key, concentrating on one small town, where the Rapture has wrecked lives and caused divisions within families. A cult devoted to silence and smoking tries to guilt-trip those left behind. A priest campaigns against the missing being regarded as heroes, giving out leaflets describing how some were sinners (he's not popular). A cop, Kevin, nominally the show's hero but with demons of his own, tries to hold the town and his family together, but fails at both.

There are shocking moments of storytelling genius, especially in a swerve-ball penultimate episode

that changes a lot of what you think you know, or whenever the smoking cult pulls off some odious stunt. But there are also some dull characters, dramatic dead ends, and moments when the gears driving the plot crunch with all-too-obvious artifice. Plus Christopher Eccleston attempting a bizarre accent that you assume is authentically whatever it's supposed to be, but makes him sound like a comedy geek rather than a driven priest.

It's all as annoyingly addictive as it is frustratingly pretentious. Just pray it gets cancelled before Lindelof writes the final episode...

► **Extras** Commentaries on the pilot and the finale with creators Damon Lindelof and Tom Perrotta; a conversation between the pair (15 minutes); a Making Of (29 minutes); a featurette on ciggy-loving cult The Guilty Remnant (eight minutes); a short preview of season two. **Dave Golder**

The first season adapts all of Tom Perrotta's original novel, and there was no sequel, meaning season two will be all-new storylines.



His fire-eating act impressed no one.

LET US PREY

Karma Police

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 19 OCTOBER

2015 | 18 | DVD

▶ Director **Brian O'Malley**

▶ Cast **Liam Cunningham, Pollyanna McIntosh, Bryan Larkin**

⚡ Although ultimately it's a flawed film, the opening of Irish horror *Let Us Prey* is a real stylish threat; with a sinister stranger (*Game Of Thrones*' Liam Cunningham) making his way through stunningly shot Scottish fields to descend upon a small parochial town.

It's a style that director Brian O'Malley maintains as the unnamed man, who may or may not be an agent of Hell, is locked up in a local police station among the town's cops and criminals, who he then proceeds to possess and punish in the name of biblical judgement. This remote town possesses a nonsensical amount of murderers – from the station doctor whose sliced-up family waits at home to the Christian sergeant with a gay man's head in his fridge. A grittier *Midsomer Murders*, if you will.

There's strong direction and a fierce performance from Cunningham, but the tonally uneven script falls short of the hyperreal farce it's aiming for. Such a self-contained plot means the film's momentum relies on its characters, who are simply uninteresting. A shame, as *Let Us Prey* possesses moments of genuine brilliance – not least its *Event Horizon*-style ending – but just doesn't compel as a whole.

⚡ **Extras** None. **Stephen Kelly**

i There actually is a *Midsomer Murders* episode called "Let Us Prey", about a series of killings motivated by religion.



The swish new Hoover had its drawbacks.

POLTERGEIST

Clowning around again

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 26 OCTOBER

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director **Gil Kenan**

▶ Cast **Sam Rockwell, Rosemarie DeWitt, Jared Harris, Jane Adams**

⚡ If you *must* update an old horror, it makes sense to have a crack at *Poltergeist*. Though Tobe Hooper's 1982 tale of a family plagued by supernatural disturbances has major "brand recognition", it's far from perfect. Arguably it's more light show than horror movie – more interested in spectacle than scares.

Credit where credit's due, this remake installs some patches, swerving common sense questions like, "Why would a family stay in a haunted house after it's been 'cleansed'?" and, "Who the hell buys their kid a creepy clown doll?"

But it makes mis-steps too. In

“Though competent, it feels oddly low-key”

the original, when five-year-old Carol Anne was sucked into some nether-dimension, we could only guess at what was keeping her company. Here, a drone's sent flying in, and the cadaver-littered CGI landscape beamed back is, though technically impressive, less shiver-inducing than the mystery of the unseen. There's nothing here to match the original's iconic "face-peeling" sequence, and Jared Harris's TV medium is no match for his predecessor. Plus, there's a fundamental problem: in '82, the notion of a spectrally abducted little girl communicating via a television set had resonance, because TV static was part of everyone's everyday experience; in the age of 24-hour transmission that's no longer true. The result's a film which, though competent, feels oddly low-key – and, predictably, pretty pointless.

⚡ **Extras** The DVD has an alternate ending, gallery and trailers. The Blu-ray adds an extended cut with seven minutes more footage. The Blu-ray 3D has both, with the theatrical cut in 3D. **Ian Berriman**

i The family's car has a bumper sticker for Hooper High School – a nod to Tobe Hooper, director of the original film.



"Take that, you damned shirt-stealer!"

NARCOPOLIS

High drama

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director **Justin Trefgarne**

▶ Cast **Elliot Cowan, Jonathan Pryce, Molly Gaisford, Elodie Yung**

⚡ In a future where recreational drugs are legal and the Ambro Corporation has a near-monopoly on getting high, Frank Grieves (Elliot Cowan) is a cop assigned to bust unlicensed street dealers. When he discovers an unidentifiable corpse apparently loaded with a mysterious new drug, Grieves learns that Ambro will do anything to stop him poking his nose into its secrets.

Narcopolis has an abundance of ideas but suffers from a lack of focus and cohesion. All the talk about Ambro's narcotics sounds like an after-school special – drugs are bad, kids – while the science in the script is softer and fuzzier than a teddy bear from Hamley's. Jonathan Pryce pops up as a scientist who makes important-sounding declarations like, "This changes everything", while explaining nothing.

The biggest problem is that the denouement hinges on a relationship that neither the screenplay nor the cast have established with any credibility beforehand. The time travel plot never connects with the legalised drugs theme, leaving *Narcopolis* feeling half-baked – unlike Ambro's customers. They're totally baked, bro.

⚡ **Extras** Director's commentary; deleted scenes; trailer. **David West**

i As well as featuring *Da Vinci's Demons*' Elliot Cowan, *Narcopolis* was partly shot on the set of the series in Wales.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

TERMINATOR GENISYS

I'll be bad

★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 2 NOVEMBER**

2015 | 12 | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Alan Taylor

▶ Cast Arnold Schwarzenegger, Emilia

Clarke, Jai Courtney, Jason Clarke,

JK Simmons, Byung-hun Lee,

Matt Smith

James Cameron may have described this fifth *Terminator* movie as a “renaissance”, saying he sees it as the third film in the series, but don’t get your hopes up. Calling *Genisys* a superior model to *Rise Of The Machines* and *Salvation* is hardly a ringing endorsement – and it’s debatable whether it’s even true.

Like the *Alien* saga, *The Terminator* is a franchise desperately clinging onto past glories, a fact *Genisys* tacitly acknowledges by shamelessly

riffing on the classic original. Unfortunately, watching Sarah Connor (Emilia Clarke) and an ageing Arnie-model Terminator interacting with the events of the 1984 movie – he was sent back to protect her when she was a kid; she now calls him “Pops” – feels more *Forrest Gump* than *Back To The Future Part II*. Even throwing a new liquid metal T-1000 and Jai Courtney’s pumped-up Kyle Reese into the mix can’t make what happens here feel integral to *Terminator* mythology. If only this ’80s-set first act wasn’t the best bit of the movie...

Then the action jumps forward to 2017, and another Skynet-shaped threat to humanity. It’s here things really start to unravel. The *Terminator* movies have always featured time travel as a plot device, without actually being

about time travel. Here the story buckles under the weight of multiple timelines, a complete lack of logic, and the sense that the rules of the saga are being haphazardly rewritten before your eyes.

Even taking the tangle of a plot out of the equation, *Genisys* misses the target. The setpieces are competent without ever wowing, it’s impossible to believe Clarke and Courtney are the same characters Linda Hamilton and Michael Biehn played in the first two movies, and the insistence on repeatedly recycling classic lines like “Come with me if you want to live” and “I’ll be back” gives the movie the feel of a bad catchphrase-based sitcom.

But all that pales into insignificance (spoilers ahead!) next to the idiocy of giving away

“A franchise clinging onto past glories”

the movie’s big twist in the trailers. While John Connor’s turncoat fate is utterly ridiculous and implausible, it might have worked as a rug-pull reveal. Instead, it’s just one stupid moment among many. It’s a misstep akin to putting an arrow pointing at Keyser Soze on the poster for *The Usual Suspects*. If Skynet has any sense it’ll be travelling back in time pretty soon to stop this movie being made.

Extras The DVD features a “Family Dynamics” featurette (16 minutes) about recasting the lead roles. The Blu-ray versions add “Infiltration And Termination” (25 minutes), a behind-the-scenes look at filming locations, and “Upgrades” (15 minutes), which focuses on the visual effects.

Richard Edwards

i Alan Taylor wasn’t a fan of his twist being spoiled. “I certainly directed those scenes with the intention that no one would know.”



One failed emissions test.

BACK TO THE FUTURE TRILOGY

Birthday Blus

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1985-1990 | PG | Blu-ray

▶ Director Robert Zemeckis

▶ Cast Michael J. Fox, Christopher

Lloyd, Thomas Wilson

You’ve seen these movies of course. The first is as close to cinematic perfection as can be; the second is brilliant and ingenious and dazzling, and was undervalued at the time; the third is a hugely enjoyable comic Western with a rousing train race climax. But you knew all that already.

Extras This 30th Anniversary set’s most intriguing addition is 10-minute short “Doc Brown Saves The World!”, which sees Christopher Lloyd do a straight-to-camera ramble in which he explains why he has to save 2045 from Griff Tannen. Set entirely in a large white room, it’s a fairly amusing trifle.

Also new: a fascinating 22-minute piece about how fans restored the original DeLorean; two witty fake ads for *Jaws 19* and hoverboards; and two episodes of the cartoon spin-off. Then there’s a meaty nine-part documentary (46 minutes) previously only on DVD.

Goodies from 2013’s Blu-ray box set are carried over too, including a six-part doc, commentaries, featurettes on the physics of *BTTF* and the Universal Studios ride, a Michael J. Fox Q&A, deleted scenes, behind-the-scenes footage and music videos.

Russell Lewin

i A Flux Capacitor Ltd Edition Collection comes with a 52-page book of unseen imagery and Flux Capacitor packaging.



Frank decided that next time he'd go for a spray tan.



TURBO KID

Eighties-style excess

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Directors Francois Simard, Anouk Whissell, Yoann-Karl Whissell

▶ Cast Munro Chambers, Laurence

Laboeuf, Michael Ironside, Aaron Jeffery

➤ **Adapted from 2011 short "T Is For Turbo"**, this '80s-enamoured action comedy spills enough red stuff to keep blood banks in business for a century. The primary blood-letter: a BMX-riding superhero who uses a weaponised "Turbo Glove" to explode his enemies in a cascade of glue.

The Kid, as he's known, lives alone in a *Mad Max*-y post-apocalyptic wasteland where acid rain has left clean water a scarce resource. The flow is controlled by Michael Ironside's tyrannical Zeus, who The Kid gets caught up with after Zeus's colourful cronies

kidnap his kooky would-be love interest Apple. Lots of hysterically over-the-top violence ensues.

Turbo Kid is a real treat. Much like grindhouse pastiche *Planet Terror*, the threadbare plot, daft dialogue and knowingly overblown performances are all part of the charm. There's also a top retro-synth soundtrack, but the real joy of *Turbo Kid* is its wildly inventive and gleefully gory violence. It's the kind of film where a man getting his intestines pulled out by pedal bike is one of the tamer moments. Better still, the effects are almost entirely practical – they'll have you howling throughout.

➤ **Extras** A good Making Of (23 minutes) and (on Blu-ray only) the original short. **Jordan Farley**

i The Turbo Glove is a repainted Nintendo Power Glove, while trader Bagu is named after a character from *Zelda II*.



"Get me David Attenborough!"

STUNG

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 26 OCTOBER**

2015 | 18 | DVD

➤ **Hooray for practical effects!** The choice to use props, latex and buckets of goop rather than CGI lend this horror-comedy a gruey charm that makes up for its flimsy plot.

Paul is a barman working at a party for some rich folk – until a swarm of giant wasps attack and carnage ensues. It's too campy to scare and the jokes are hit and miss, but Lance Henriksen is good value as the sardonic local mayor and it's a fun enough monster movie.

➤ **Extras** Making Of; bloopers; cast interviews. **Will Salmon**



Freddy Krueger had left a little present.

WE ARE STILL HERE

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 OCTOBER**

2015 | 18 | DVD

➤ **This haunted house tale has a promising early chill.**

A couple escape the city for the wintry American countryside, moving to an old prairie home to outrun the memory of their dead son. It's a sombre, effective beginning, full of space and silence, the dread conjured by such subliminal tactics as a cellar wall with the pitted texture of a skull. But it's a promise squandered as the film surrenders to horror cliché, in your face when previously it had been in your head.

➤ **Extras** Commentary; Making Of. **Nick Setchfield**



Collecting heads was Beryl's hobby.

THE DIABOLICAL

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 OCTOBER**

2015 | 15 | DVD/VOD

➤ **They're asking for it with that title.** As it happens, this *isn't* diabolical. It's no masterpiece, but there's two-thirds of a solid low-budget horror here about a family (including *Heroes'* Ali Larter) troubled by supernatural visitations.

The first hour rattles along nicely. There are multiple visitations in the first 10 minutes alone, which detracts from the tension, but is at least fun. However, a final third switch of genre is ill-advised and leads to an incoherent conclusion.

➤ **Extras** None. **Will Salmon**



Egg whisks: must be handled with care.

THE LAZARUS EFFECT

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 OCTOBER**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

➤ **A glamorous collection of scientists stumble on a way to bring people back from the dead in this Blumhouse horror.** Naturally there's something very wrong with them.

The cast is starry, but the characters are thinner than discount loo roll. The lab makes for an effectively creepy setting, but jump scares and rote ideas are the order of the day, while the science vs religion debates feel half-hearted at best.

➤ **Extras** Making Of; featurette; deleted scenes. **Jordan Farley**

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



The wait for internet porn continued.

THE GREEN MAN

Hit and Amis

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1990 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director Elijah Moshinsky

▶ Cast Albert Finney, Linda Marlowe, Sarah Berger, Michael Hordern, Josie Lawrence, Nicky Henson

▶ **Maurice Allington** (a superb Albert Finney), owner of restaurant-cum-hotel The Green Man, is having something of a mid-life crisis. His father's just died at dinner, he has a closer relationship with alcohol than his teenage daughter, and his efforts to get his wife and mistress into a threesome may not end in success. Oh, and he sees ghosts – ancient, scary ones that were only meant to be part of the spiel he gives to tourists.

Like the 1969 Kingsley Amis novel on which it's based, this three-part BBC serial is a curious hybrid of moral fable, comic yarn and ghost story, and arguably the supernatural aspect is the least successful of the three. Its scares will be familiar to those who've seen just a few ghostly screen tales.

It's best when it's at its most typically Amis-esque – with quirky characters being darkly humorous, like Maurice organising the threesome on the day of his dad's funeral. The extraordinarily gory sequence which kicks it off certainly isn't in keeping with the general mood. Possibly too dawdling and urbane for some, it's nevertheless one of the more unusual and intriguing TV dramas of its day.

▶ **Extras** None. **Russell Lewin**

i Look out for a copy of Amis's *The Old Devils* – plus Stephen King's *Skeleton Crew* and James Herbert's *The Fog*.



Some were happier than others about the spelling of "centre".

SPACE: 1999 Series Two

Lunar adventures go loonier

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1976-1977 | PG | Blu-ray

▶ Creator Gerry Anderson

▶ Cast Martin Landau, Barbara Bain, Catherine Schell, Tony Anholt, Nick Tate

BLU-RAY DEBUT ▶ **This second run**

of the series about a lunar base crew's adventures after the Moon's blasted into deep space saw American producer Fred Freiberger come onboard, a man often blamed for wrecking the original *Star Trek* – and, indeed, *Space: 1999*. But his attempts to inject more action and drama aren't as fatal as sometimes claimed.

New regular Maya, a shapechanger, is very daft, mind, her ability to save pretty much every situation undercutting any sense of threat. Aside from her, the villains are camper – a chap in yellow undies in "A Matter Of

“The spaceship FX have endured best”

Balance” is a corker – and the monsters ropier (like the one-eyed rugs in enjoyable two-parter “The Bringers Of Wonder”).

The spaceship FX have endured best, not at all diminished by presentation in hi-def, and while *Space: 1999* series two is no classic, it's watchable enough in its own kooky yet homely way. Silly fun.

▶ **Extras** A vintage behind-the-scenes piece on the making of “The Mark Of Archanon” (25 minutes), plus another on the model shop; 1976 interviews with cast and crew; a Martin Landau interview from 1994; original audio source recordings for four episodes; series two episode “Seed Of Destruction” re-edited and re-scored as if it were made for series one; *Cosmos: 1999*, a stopmotion fan film from 1979; a blooper; music-only tracks for every episode; alternate/longer effects shots from a stock footage archive; script and annual PDFs; trailers and promos; clean titles; image galleries. A few of these were on the 2001 DVDs, but most are new to this release. **Russell Lewin**

i Stanley Kubrick threatened legal action as he reckoned the show pinched the look of 2001: A Space Odyssey.



“Hello and welcome to *Newsnight*.”

TOKYO GHOUL

Gutsy anime

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Shuhei Morita

▶ Cast Natsuki Hanae, Sora Amamiya, Kana Hanazawa, Rintarou Nishi

▶ **Horror anime has had a** revival in recent years, spearheaded by the hugely popular *Attack On Titan*. The 12-part *Tokyo Ghoul* is another striking entry. Set in a present-day city, it sees a luckless young man find the girl he's dating is a ravaging, flesh-eating monster. She's killed before she can finish him, but after her organs are transplanted into the dying boy, he becomes a monster himself.

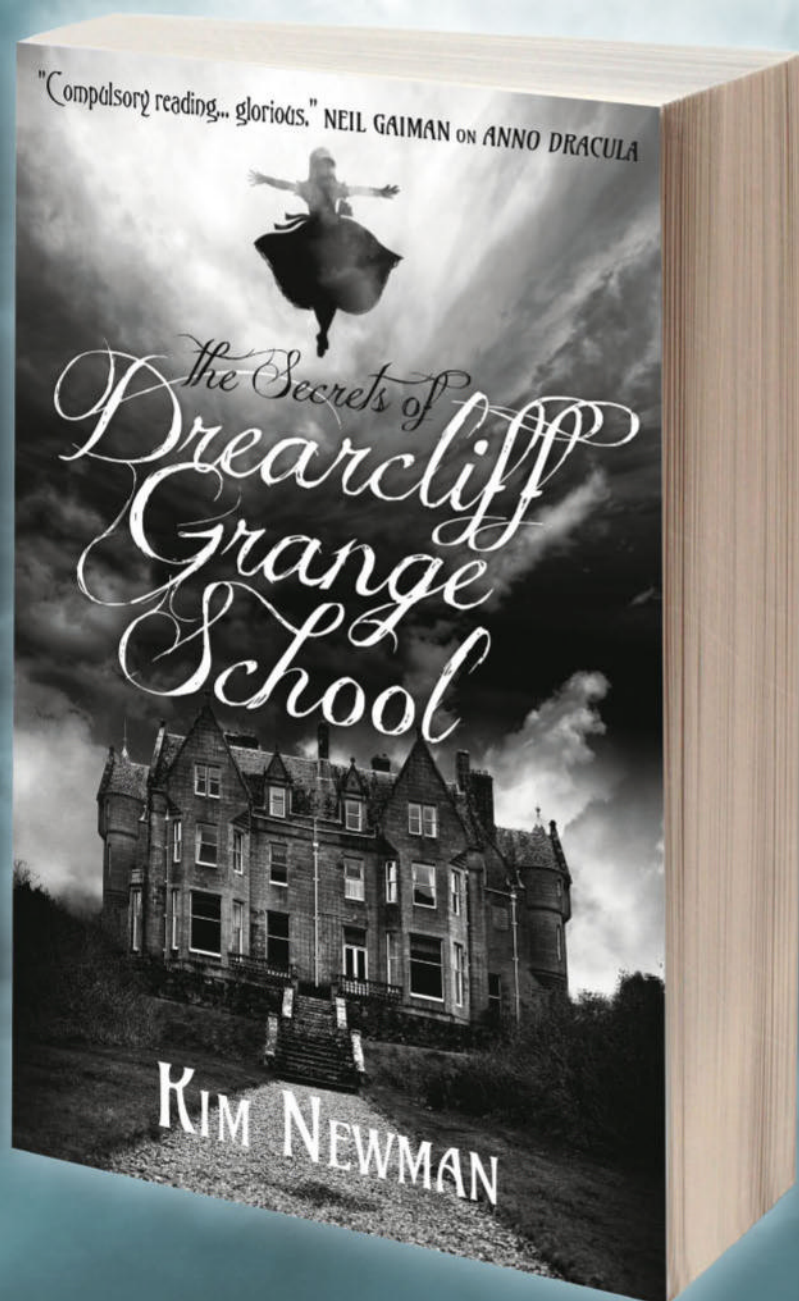
After an impressive opening, it seems to lose its way for a while. There's an interesting plotline about a “ghoul” minority trying to survive in human society without killing, but there's also campy, violent farce and superhero-style action. Thankfully the show eventually pulls its strands together, becoming a smart and surprisingly moral portrait of a conflict where both humans and ghouls are victims.

Warning: the last episode slides into shocking horror, torturing a character that we've grown to truly care about. The plot is also completely unresolved; a second series is planned for release next year.

▶ **Extras** Two commentaries by the English dub cast, a featurette, ads, promo videos, textless credits and a trailer. The Blu-ray includes a 48-page booklet. **Andrew Osmond**

i In Japan, *Tokyo Ghoul* was broadcast at night, but still had some particularly gruesome details censored. This is uncut.

A week after her mother found her sleeping on the ceiling,
Amy Thomsett is delivered to her new school...



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INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3

Further scares

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/Download

▶ Director Leigh Whannell

▶ Cast Stefanie Scott, Dermot Mulroney, Lin Shaye, Leigh Whannell

◆ **Having co-created the *Saw* series and written the first two *Insidious* films, James Wan's partner-in-grime Leigh Whannell steps up as director for *Chapter 3*. It's a commendable first feature.**

Set several years before the Lambert hauntings, it finds a new family fall victim to a parasitical spirit from dark realm the Further. Teen Quinn Brenner (Stefanie Scott) is the fleshbag targeted for possession after psychic Elise Rainier tries to contact Quinn's recently deceased mother. Instead the call catches the attention of The Man Who Can't Breathe – a deceased cancer patient who

terrorises Quinn when an accident leaves her housebound.

The *Insidious* films have always been bonkers, but *Chapter 3* reins things in with fewer time-bending shenanigans and more traditional chills. Scott is a likeable enough lead, and Dermot Mulroney's dad has just the right mix of strength and helpless vulnerability. The film's antagonist is the standout though – he's the series' creepiest creation yet, and though Whannell isn't above cheap scares, for the first half The Man is effectively obscured. It's a shame he doesn't stay in the shadows, as eventually over-exposure robs both him and the film of their power.

◆ **Extras** A Making Of, three deleted scenes, and four so-so featurettes. **Jordan Farley**

i James Wan, director of *Insidious* and *Insidious Chapter 2*, has a cameo as an obnoxious acting school judge.

TOMORROWLAND: A WORLD BEYOND

No future for you

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Brad Bird

▶ Cast George Clooney, Britt Robertson, Hugh Laurie, Raffey Cassidy

◆ **It's one of the eternal** grumbles of the 21st century, so common it's already the creakiest of comedy clichés: if this is the future, where's my personal jetpack?

That's also, in essence, the pitch behind *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond*. Brad Bird's hymn to retro-futurism is a film you desperately want to love, a celebration of the kind of gleaming utopias that provided dream-fuel for decades of science fiction. And its visuals are frequently as

beautiful as its sense of regret for a world that never came: Norman Rockwell prairies meet Flash Gordon citadels while hover-rails transport smiley futureonauts through impossible skylines of chrome and glass. But its tale of a disappointed dreamer (George Clooney, entertainingly grouchy) teaming with a young optimist (Britt Robertson, endearing) to reclaim the world's mislaid hope never quite moves you as much as it should. Ultimately it feels as hollow as the second-hand future it's hymning.

◆ **Extras** "Remembering The Future" is a brief featurette with Brad Bird that includes some wonderful archival footage of the original Disneyland attraction plus

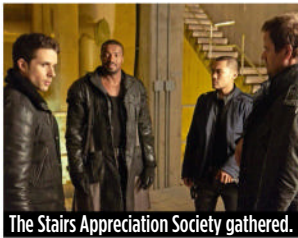
As television aerials go, it was a corker.



rare '50s Disney animation. Bird also brings us two short on-set video diaries, and there are featurettes on casting and scoring as well as a smattering of deleted scenes. Best of all are three faux items that expand the movie's universe: "The Origins Of Plus Ultra", a stylish, retro-rendered Pixar animated short supposedly from the early '60s; Blast From

The Past commercial: a fake TV ad for the movie's geek-dream of a memorabilia shop; out-takes from *The World Of Tomorrow Science Hour*, a parody of all those stiff-backed educational shows, complete with a magnificently grumpy Hugh Laurie. **Nick Setchfield**

i Look out for the Iron Giant and Mr Incredible in the Blast From The Past shop – two nods to Brad Bird's CV.



The Stairs Appreciation Society gathered.

DARK MATTER Season One

Amnesiacs On A Spaceship

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Creators Joseph Mallozzi, Paul Mullie

▶ Cast Marc Bendavid, Melissa O'Neil, Jodelle Ferland, Roger Cross

◆ **There are times, watching *Dark Matter*, when you wonder if this is a new high concept: a show entirely comprising bottle episodes. But occasionally there's a story where the crew gets to explore a shopping centre, or a warehouse, or a Canadian forest, so that scuppers that idea. There's no getting round the fact, though: *Dark Matter* looks cheap.**

Being cheap isn't necessarily a bad thing if there are good ideas, interesting characters and ingenuity in the scripts. Unfortunately, *Dark Matter* has familiar ideas, familiar characters and familiar scripts.

The set-up has promise. Six people wake from cryogenic sleep on a ship, with no idea of their past lives. They then try to figure out who they are. Each, of course, has a *big* secret, revealed over the season.

It's all dispiritingly by-the-numbers and old-fashioned. The showrunners have years of experience on *Stargate* shows, but *Dark Matter* feels like it was made in 1995. Even the design work is uninspiring. After a full season you'd be hard-pressed to sketch the central ship from memory.

◆ **Extras** A mini-featurette for each episode. **Dave Golder**

◆ *Stargate Atlantis's* Torri Higginson and David Hewlett cameo, and *Stargate SG-1's* Amanda Tapping directs an episode.



THE ENFIELD HAUNTING

All Fright In The 1970s

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 OCTOBER**

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director Kristoffer Nyholm

▶ Cast Timothy Spall, Matthew MacFadyen, Juliet Stevenson, Rosie Cavaliero, Eleanor Worthington-Cox

◆ **Based on a notorious real-life case from the late '70s, in which a council house family was plagued by misbehaving furniture and demonic voices, this three-part series achieved Sky Living's best ever ratings back in May. But it's not quite as successful as that statistic might suggest.**

Eleanor Worthington-Cox is excellent as Janet Hodgson, the believably blunt, cheeky 11-year-old girl at the centre of it all. There are a few decent shocks (particularly a surreal meat-carving nightmare sequence). And the period is evoked effectively, with all its brown wallpaper, over-sized collars and David Soul posters.

Whether, as star Timothy Spall claims, the mundanity of the

setting, "in a sense makes it even scarier" is debatable, though. There's an inescapable comedy bathos to seeing a sinister spirit popping up inside a View-Master, or a poltergeist chucking the marbles from a game of KerPlunk about. Ditto a possessed young girl yelling, "Stick it up your arse!"

Those familiar with the real-life story may also be surprised by how much has been fabricated to provide both a backstory for the hauntings, and an added emotional dimension, with paranormal investigator Maurice Grosse (Spall) here driven by an obsession with his own dead daughter (also called Jane). There's a degree to which forcing this case to conform to a traditional dramatic template de-emphasises its ambiguities and smoothes away the rough edges that make it so interesting.

◆ **Extras** Five short promo pieces (13 minutes), previously available online. **Ian Berriman**

◆ When Janet Grosse's life support is turned off, her brother and sister are played by the real-life brother's son and daughter.

(ROUND UP)



After a superb second year, **ARROW** SEASON THREE (out now, Blu-ray/DVD) goes to even darker places, but can't achieve the consistent highs of Slade Wilson's vendetta against Oliver Queen. There are noteworthy episodes, including an incredible mid-season finale and several fun *Flash* crossovers, but the League of Assassins arc falls flat, Laurel Lance is still pants and the flashbacks feel entirely redundant. **AGENTS OF SHIELD** SEASON TWO (19 October, Blu-ray/DVD) sees the series continue to be the beast in the attic of Marvel's screen universe: unloved, just a little mortifying but tolerated as part of the family. This season ultimately disappoints, reducing the grandeur of the comic book *Inhumans* to a dull riff on *Lost Horizon*. An arc about a rival *SHIELD* also fizzles. **THE ORIGINALS** SEASON TWO (19 October, Blu-ray/DVD) sees mum and dad arrive in New Orleans and indulge in some extreme hissyfits that make their dysfunctional offspring more psychotic and bloodthirsty than ever. There are times when it becomes soapy and repetitive, but in the noble Elijah and the feral Klaus the show has two vampire stars who keep things entertaining and unpredictable. Any scene involving werewolves is worth fast-forwarding through, mind. Unless they're being massacred. Finally, also out now are **THE AVENGERS** SERIES SIX (making its Blu-ray debut) and DVD box sets of **THE 100** SEASON TWO and **HAVEN** SEASON FIVE, VOLUME ONE, while 19 October brings the first 11 episodes of *CBeebies'* new **CLANGERS**. Phew!



THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS

Nightmares at half price

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 3 NOVEMBER**

484 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author **Stephen King**

► Publisher **Hodder & Stoughton**

◆ **He's been a bestselling author** since the '70s, there have been endless film and TV adaptations of his work – but if you want real proof of the achievements of Stephen King, simply look at his short stories. In a literary world where one of the few ironclad rules is that short stories don't make money, King is still able to bring out bestselling collections of demonically gripping tales, and his latest release is another bumper crop of sharp, well-crafted fiction.

The Bazaar Of Bad Dreams collects together 17 works published over the last six years with three previously unpublished pieces, and follows the pattern King has evolved over his career, mixing old-fashioned suspense together with more characterful, literary explorations. Despite his Master of Horror mantle, King has

always been happiest when veering from genre to genre, and while the results here are occasionally a little variable, he's still able to land knockout blows when it counts.

The tales that naturally grab the attention are the old-school, traditional King stories like "The Little Green God Of Agony", in which a faith healer tries to prove that pain is caused by demons, and "Mile 81", where a shape-changing creature in the form of a car lurks in wait at an abandoned vehicle rest stop. "Bad Little Kid" plays with the concept of a purely evil child by telling the story of a man hounded by an unstoppable nemesis, while "Obits" explores what happens when an online

“The overall standard is high”

columnist discovers his mean-spirited fictional obituaries have started coming true.

The most satisfying of all of these is "Ur", the longest story in the collection, the inventive tale of a college professor who accidentally acquires an e-reader that can access books from parallel universes. The finale sees King utilising ideas that would later find their way into his time travel saga *11-22-63*, and other previous King works are sometimes referenced or echoed across the stories (such as the moody Western tale "A Death", which is partially reminiscent of *The Green Mile*).

It's in some of the collection's quieter stories that King really gets to showcase his facility with character, and his writing is often at its most emotionally devastating here. There's a greater emphasis on mortality and the accumulative effects of ageing across these stories (many of which are non-genre), but while the effects are often very moving, there's no danger of King getting sentimental in his old age. His fiction still packs an impressive punch, from the bleak exploration of how amoral behaviour can wreck lives in "Morality", to the melancholy apocalypse of "Sudden Thunder".

Admittedly, not all of King's experiments come off. Unexpected sports drama tangent in "Blockade Billy" is fun but may test the patience of anyone who's not a baseball fan, while the inclusion of two works of poetry ("The Bone Church" and "Tommy") feels over-indulgent. King also provides introductions to the stories; these are entertaining, but give away a little too much, losing some of the sense of discovery these collections can often bring.

These few weaknesses aside, the overall standard remains remarkably high, and King's storytelling instincts are as razor sharp as ever. Despite being in his late sixties he's showing no signs of slowing down his ferociously prolific output, and *The Bazaar Of Bad Dreams* is yet more proof that there are few writers out there who can match him. **Saxon Bullock**

i "The Little Green God Of Agony" was adapted into a 24-page webcomic for King's website: <http://bit.ly/littlegreenweb>.



SLADE HOUSE

Another piece of the puzzle

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 27 OCTOBER**

233 pages | Hardback

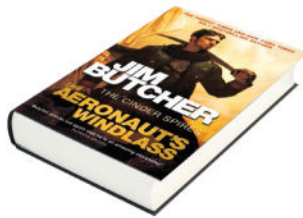
► Author **David Mitchell**

► Publisher **Sceptre**

◆ **David Mitchell is nothing if** not ambitious. In an interview with *Vulture* last year, he described his novels – of which this is the seventh – as "chapters in an über-book". All those little connections across time and space that made *Cloud Atlas* such an endlessly rewarding puzzle can be found, it turns out, across Mitchell's whole oeuvre. Characters from one book cameo in another; ancestors and descendants can be traced from story to story. These aren't just grace notes; this is a single, mind-boggling world.

Slade House links most obviously to last year's *The Bone Clocks*, but it's a very different beast. There are shades, here, of Iain M Banks's *Inversions*: a highly engaging tale in its own right, with occasional weird bits that make more sense if you know the wider universe. Read on its own, this is a deliciously creepy page-turning mystery: a series of atmospheric linked novellas about a spooky bigger-on-the-inside house, marred only by some clunky moments in which the villains discuss their plans. Mitchell's gift for characterisation shines through, making everyone vivid even when we only spend 30 pages in their company. The perfect short Halloween read, with extra rewards for Mitchell fans. **Nic Clarke**

i The starting point for *Slade House* was Mitchell's 280-tweet story "The Right Sort": <http://bit.ly/righttweets>.



THE AERONAUT'S WINDLASS

Airship Troopers



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

640 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author **Jim Butcher**

► Publisher **Orbit Books**

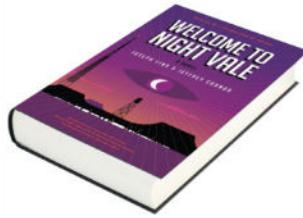
◉ **Ignore the thin veneer of** brass plate; *Dresden Files* author Jim Butcher's new *Cinder Spires* series is pure space opera.

That's actually quite a relief, because the elements of Victoriana don't really work. In particular, the dialogue when characters are in formal situations (over the inevitable cup of tea) is excruciatingly stilted and affected.

Butcher's created a fascinating world though, a misty planet where wooden airships powered by crystals and ether ply between towering "Spires", each a nation in its own right. Most of the characters are fairly bland; the ships are the real stars. The battles between the Albion-based privateer *Predator* and the military ships of *Spire Aurora* are genuinely gripping, as are the hand-to-hand fights between humans and the vicious, insectile silkweavers – they all feel as realistic as those in Bernard Cornwell's historical novels.

The main problem is that despite the battles, everything feels terribly safe. The characters, from grizzled airship Captain Grim to cat-hugging novice guard Bridget, are all rather nice, and you get the feeling that nothing bad could ever really happen to them. In the end, that drains the excitement. **Miriam McDonald**

i At 10,000 feet tall, *Spire Albion* is over three times as tall as Earth's current tallest building, Dubai's Burj Khalifa.



WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

From podcast to prose



► **RELEASED 20 OCTOBER**

416 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Authors **Joseph Fink, Jeffrey Cranor**

► Publisher **Orbit Books**

◉ **Something weird is going on** in *Night Vale*. Weirder than usual, that is; the small desert town is, after all, the kind of place where pens are against the law, hooded figures roam the dog park at night, and a malevolent glowing cloud heads up the school board. This particular weirdness concerns an urgent message from a man in a tan jacket, though he's so eerily forgettable that no one can quite remember who he is or what he wanted them to do...

A careful balance of the mundane and the fantastic, the macabre and the poignant, *Welcome To Night Vale* is a spin-off novel from the cultishly popular podcast of the same title. Writers Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor have a well-practised rhythm that allows them to wring charm and humour from even the most grotesque ideas, and their distinctive style carries over seamlessly from audio to print.

Though the perspective of the novel is new, the jokes and quirks are so familiar that fans will sink comfortably into it, hearing most of the prose in podcast narrator Cecil Baldwin's smoothly sinister voice. Newcomers might feel less at home, but there's an easy fix for that – the podcast is free to download. **Sarah Dobbs**

i Cranor based the Man in the Tan Jacket on a man he once glimpsed casually smoking beside a wrecked car.

Detail of Methodia Rascal's "Battle Of Koom Valley".



THE COMPLEAT DISCWORLD ATLAS

Edge to edge



► **RELEASED 22 OCTOBER**

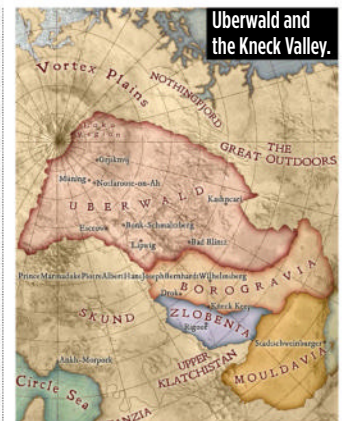
127 pages | Hardback

► Authors **Terry Pratchett, The Discworld Emporium**

► Publisher **Doubleday**

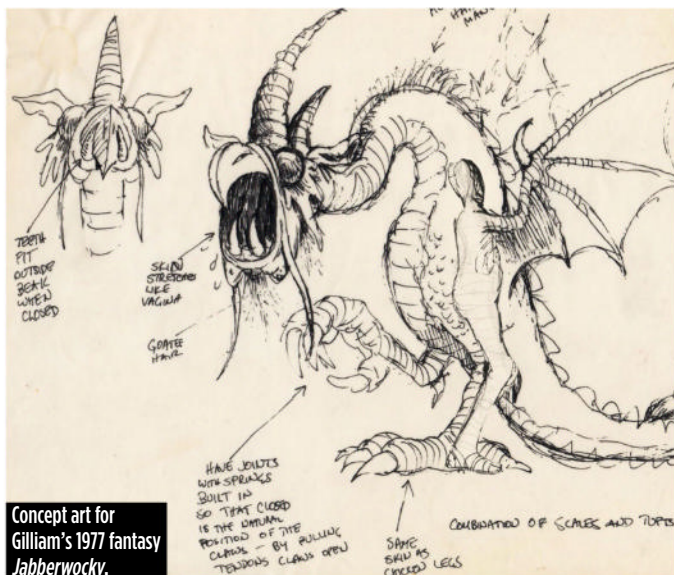
◉ **For fans who've loved the** Discworld for more than 30 years, there's something especially heartbreaking about an author bio that refers to Terry Pratchett in the past tense. But with the final novel released in August, now's a good time to look back on the entirety of the series with this "general and descriptive geography" of the Disc. Arranged like a conventional atlas, it covers each of the nations of the Disc in turn, discussing their history, governance and opportunities for tourism. A fold-out map helps you to put each country in context.

“More maps within the book would help”



Though the text is amusing, it acts as a reminder of what it's not – you get a strong urge throughout to put the atlas down and begin a re-read of the novels instead. And more maps within the book would help to place each country visually without having to fold out the huge map or flip back and forth. This is a fun collectable for fans, but if you're still to buy any of the novels, get them first. Then raise a drink to what we've lost. **Rhian Drinkwater**

i Pratchett resisted mapping Discworld for a long time, arguing that, "You can't map a sense of humour".



Concept art for Gilliam's 1977 fantasy *Jabberwocky*.

GILLIAMESQUE

Terry's All Told



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

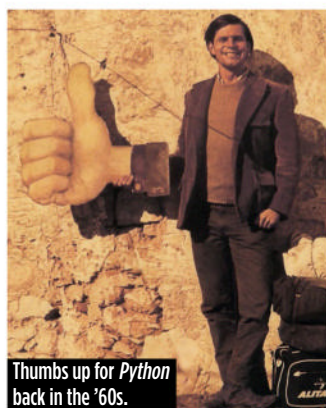
297 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Terry Gilliam

► Publisher Canongate Books

► **Terry Gilliam's career is very** well documented, so it's probably wise that this "pre-posthumous memoir" doesn't rake over old ground too much. Instead, it takes more of a scrapbook approach, interspersing the maverick director's reminiscences with ephemera, from storyboards and sketchbook pages to childhood cartoons and Valentine's card drawings, all accompanied by handwritten commentary. Judging by this, Gilliam rarely throws anything away – right down to an old receipt for a coat!

The pre-*Python* sections are particularly fascinating: pre-college, Gilliam was surprisingly square. Later on there are great



Thumbs up for *Python* back in the '60s.

anecdotes about dealing with the likes of Marlon Brando and Hunter S Thompson, and interesting views on topics such as auteur theory, director's cuts and wrangling actors.

Throughout, the tone of voice is amusingly self-deprecating and acerbic. And having turned that critical beam on himself he's not averse to occasionally turning it on others, in entertainingly waspish fashion: *Brothers Grimm* producers the Weinsteins don't emerge well, and Steven Spielberg is memorably skewered too. **Ian Berriman**

“The pre-*Python* sections are fascinating”

i Gilliam plans to be buried in a cardboard coffin on an Italian hill, with an oak sapling planted in his chest.



DAUGHTERS UNTO DEVILS

Little House On The Scary



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

231 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Amy Lukavics

► Publisher Simon & Schuster

Children's Books

► **Daughters Unto Devils** is surely one of the most adult horror stories ever published under a children's imprint.

Little House On The Prairie meets *The Blair Witch Project*, Amy Lukavics's debut is a clammily claustrophobic tale of backwoods occultism that doesn't spare its young adult readership the gory details.

In the depths of a harsh mountain winter where “the days pass like molasses”, 16-year-old Amanda Verner is convinced she's seen the devil in the woods. Come summer, the family ups sticks for the prairie, fixing up an abandoned cabin that will make the perfect homestead – when they've washed the blood off the walls.

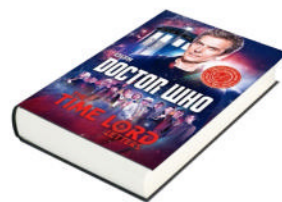
What unfolds is a visceral tale of demonic possession with a queasily infant-fixated line in body horror: prairie ants crawl in the mouth and eyes of a deafblind baby, and there are dark folktales of scarecrows with the heads of murdered children. Amanda, meanwhile, suffers a miscarriage and is haunted by the ghost of her unborn child.

Despite the occasional lapse into poor taste, *Daughters Unto Devils* is a vivid, beautifully written slice of American gothic horror. **Paul Kirkley**

i Lukavics was herself raised in a small mountain town, where she discovered her mother's Stephen King collection.

BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



DOCTOR WHO: THE TIME LORD LETTERS

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

256 pages | Hardback

► Author Justin Richards

► Publisher BBC Books

● This year's oh-god-how-the-hell-do-we-do-yet-another-*Who*-book release. Coming up with new formats for these must be murder.

● Features 128 documents written by, to, or occasionally just about the Doctor.

● Some we already knew existed but didn't see the exact contents of – like a warning note left for the Time Lords in “The Deadly Assassin”.

● Others plug gaps – so hastily-departed '60s companion Dodo finally gets a proper farewell.

● Explanatory notes fill in the narrative context. Though if you had any interest in the letters, you'd probably know the stories already.

● The Doctor doesn't really seem like the type to sit still long enough to pen all these missives.

● Intermittently mildly amusing, but soon starts to feel a mite pointless.



Reviews



THE HOUSE ON COLD HILL

Ghost botch



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

320 pages | Hardback/Ebook

▶ Author **Peter James**

▶ Publisher **Macmillan**

◉ **Peter James is hugely** popular in the crime fiction world – his Roy Grace novels alone have sold a lead pipe-dropping 15 million copies – but he also has a sideline in penning supernatural thrillers like 1996's *Alchemist*.

The House On Cold Hill is very much in that vein. It's a traditional ghost story set in a decrepit mansion 10 miles out of Brighton. The Harcourt family (wealthy enough to buy an enormous mansion, but still apparently struggling, the poor dears) move in, hoping that it'll become their dream home. The sinister forces that reside there have other ideas...

The book surprises with an opening chapter that shifts suddenly from tranquility to tragedy. Unfortunately, that's just about the only twist in a book that's overly fond of ghost story clichés. This is horror for the ITV1 audience, complete with glowing orbs, a spectral old lady and the uncanny sense that you've been here before. You have – if you've ever read a haunted house tale or watched an MR James *Ghost Story For Christmas*. The straightforward prose keeps the narrative rolling along nicely, but this is unlikely to scare anyone but the greenest of horror readers. **Will Salmon**

i James claims that the Sussex manor he used to live in was haunted by not one but four individual ghosts.



THE WATCHERS

The truth is over by there



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

544 pages | Paperback/Ebook

▶ Author **Neil Spring**

▶ Publisher **Quercus Books**

◉ **Ever looked up at the night** sky and hoped to spot a flying saucer? Wondered if those strange lights might be an alien spaceship rather than a plane? Well, get ready to stare intently at the ground instead from now on, because *The Watchers* makes the idea of UFOs terrifying.

Set in deepest darkest Wales in the late '70s, it packs in more unexplainable incidents than a whole season of *The X-Files* – plus a generous dollop of Cold War paranoia. Robert Wilding, a parliamentary researcher, reckons the American military is up to no good at a remote base near his childhood home, so he sets out to investigate. But the conspiracy he uncovers would give even Mulder nightmares.

There's something irresistible about the way each layer of the mystery is peeled back, and Neil Spring has a wicked turn of phrase. His description of the Watchers – “their faces are made of shadows”, shudder – is the kind of thing you remember in the middle of the night and really wish you hadn't. But the balance of realistic and supernatural terrors gets a bit wobbly at times, and there's not much in the way of characterisation. Still, bonus points for finding another way to make Maggie Thatcher scary.

Sarah Dobbs

i There really were UFO sightings in Broadhaven: in 1977, 14 kids reported seeing a spaceship and a silvery alien.

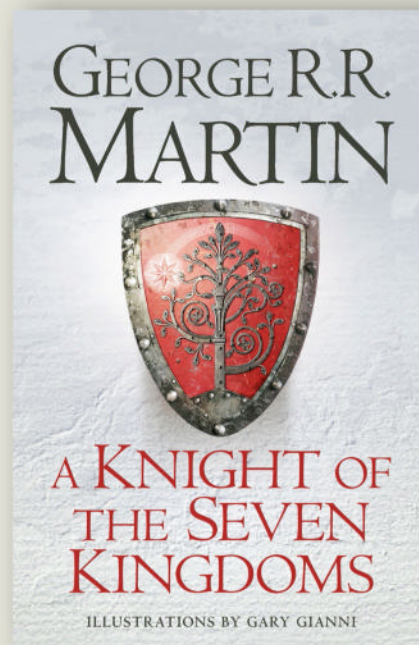
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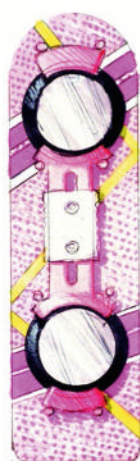


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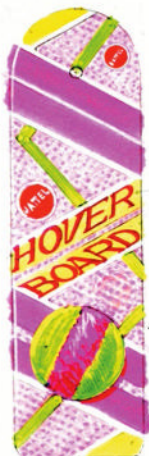
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BOOKS

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Bottom View



MFL FUSION

BACK TO THE FUTURE THE ULTIMATE VISUAL HISTORY

Getting arty with Marty

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 20 OCTOBER**

224 pages | Hardback

► Authors Michael Klastorin,

Randal Atamaniuk

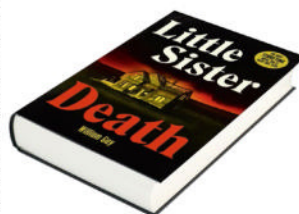
► Publisher Titan Books

◉ **Coming out the day before the** one Marty and Doc travel to in *Back To The Future Part II*, this weighty volume covers the making of the three movies, as well as the Universal Studios ride and the animated series.

It largely details the production process of the films; if you want, say, critical and fan reaction, go elsewhere. Thankfully it's pretty honest, so we get good stuff about first Marty Eric Stoltz – from him hitting co-star Thomas F Wilson to insisting on always being called “Marty” by everyone on the crew, it's pretty eye-opening.

One reason for the book's hefty price (£35) is the winsome removable ephemera it comes with: a Biff Tannen dollar bill, for instance, a *Jaws 19* poster and, best of all, a lenticular version of the photo in which Marty's family starts to disappear. Storyboards, unseen pics, concept art, letters between company bods and new interviews also feature in what must have been a painstaking, but undoubtedly rewarding, project. The writing style is a little dry, but this is still a high priority purchase for fans of this most fantastic of franchises. **Russell Lewin**

i When Christopher Lloyd was told Eric Stoltz'd been fired he said, “Who's Eric?!” He thought Stoltz's name actually was Marty.



LITTLE SISTER DEATH

The Beale Witch Project

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 15 OCTOBER**

224 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author William Gay

► Publisher Faber & Faber

◉ **The late William Gay didn't** publish any fiction until he was close to 60. In just over a decade, he put out three bleak southern gothic novels and several short story collections. When he passed away in 2012 that appeared to be that for his slim body of work. Then this ghost story was unearthed...

It's the early '80s, and David Binder and his family move out to rural Tennessee. He's working on a novel inspired by the brutal events that happened at the isolated Beale farm and so, clearly a glutton for punishment, he decides to buy it. It's not long before strange things start to happen around the house, and a sinister figure is spotted watching the family...

There's a familiarity to ghost stories that can rob them of their scares. That's not the case here. The book's brevity only adds to the sustained sense of dread, and it positively thrums with a dark, witchy power. Gay has a knack for quietly eerie imagery and his prose feels as ancient and evil as the barbarous acts that began this haunting. *Little Sister Death* lands somewhere between Stephen King, Cormac McCarthy and *The Blair Witch Project* – and is as insidious and terrifying as that sounds.

Will Salmon

i There's still one more, final William Gay novel left to come; *The Lost Country* will be published in 2016.



THE SAND MEN

Trouble in paradise

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

384 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Christopher Fowler

► Publisher Solaris

◉ **Walking the line between** genre and non-genre fiction is often tricky; new thriller *The Sand Men* invokes one of the experts in the field, pulling off a deliberate homage to the darkly satirical novels of JG Ballard. Walking a similar path to Ballard stories like *High Rise* and *Super-Cannes*, it's an examination of the affluent yet divided society of Dubai.

The story follows Lea, the wife of an engineer hired to assist with the opening of Dream World, a luxurious Dubai resort that's been plagued by a series of strange accidents. Already distant from her husband and her daughter, Lea feels trapped in the gated community for foreign workers, but the death of a neighbour leads her onto the trail of unsettling secrets.

Only lightly qualifying as a genre novel, the book is strongest when exploring the shocking gaps between the wealth of the resort and the poverty it co-exists with. Fowler's experience writing crime thrillers gives the plot an atmospheric, slow-burning edge, although the ultimate reveal stretches disbelief a little too far. Despite this, *The Sand Men* remains an interesting, challenging read that explores relevant and discomfiting territory. **Saxon Bullock**

i A collection of Fowler's Bryant & May short stories is due in November, with the 13th novel arriving in May 2016.

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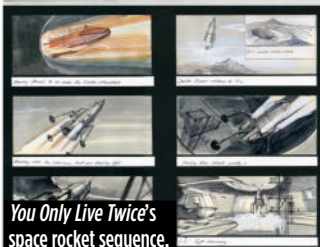
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BOOKS

Volcano interior by Ken Adam, for *You Only Live Twice*.



You Only Live Twice's space rocket sequence.



OHMSS's Blofeld coat of arms designs by Syd Cain.

BOND BY DESIGN

Licence to dream

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

320 pages | Hardback

► Author Meg Simmonds

► Publisher DK



Costume concept of Tiffany Case for *Diamonds Are Forever*.

◉ We've seen books celebrating the design side of Bond before, of course. But as the old poster boast has it, this one's, "the biggest, it's the best, it's Bond... and beyond!"

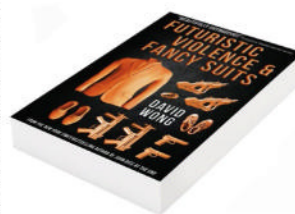
A hefty hardback as outsized as Goldfinger's ego, *Bond By Design* raids the Eon archive to gather 24 films' worth of behind-the-scenes dreaming (yes, *SPECTRE*'s in there too, though anyone itching for a glimpse of 007's latest adventure may feel shortchanged by the solitary image, glorious though it is).

It's a lavish, frequently breathtaking trawl, showcasing the creative visions that birthed some of cinema's greatest iconography, from *Live And Let*

Die's macabre tarot deck to the spidery futurism of *The Spy Who Loved Me's* Atlantis lair. Master designer Ken Adam's sharp, kinetic drawings still explode off the page, let alone the screen.

Best of all we have Adam's original design sketches for Bond's immortal Aston Martin DB5, laden with such optional extras as a hand grenade disguised as a cocktail shaker. This particular piece of goon-slaying gizmology never made it to the movies but there's rarely been a better metaphor for Bond himself. **Nick Setchfield**

i *Moonraker's* costume designer Jacques Fonteray was also responsible for the far-out fashions in 1968's *Barbarella*.



FUTURISTIC VIOLENCE & FANCY SUITS

Dressed To Thrill

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

496 pages | Paperback

► Author David Wong

► Publisher Titan Books

◉ Superhero stories have long been the domain of comics and movies, but they're now becoming more commonplace in prose; they really need a strong hook to make up for the lack of visuals, though. Best known for *John Dies At The End*, David Wong's (real name Jason Pargin) first foray into the genre is a knowingly smart take on the Iron Man mythos. Zoey Ashe, daughter of the late, Tony Stark-esque industrialist Arthur Livingston, is thrust into a battle between her father's cohorts The Suits and the villainous Moloch over the secrets of his Raiden tech, which turns soldiers into cybernetic superhumans.

The whole drama is livestreamed on social network Blink, and an early scene of a serial killer broadcasting his attempt to abduct Zoey is particularly effective. But beyond the snappy title and slightly annoying affectations like the dollar sign in the name of dystopian city Tabula Ra\$, *Futuristic Violence & Fancy Suits* is about as memorable as a routine episode of *Arrow*. Thanks to the relentlessly brisk pace, it's an engaging read, but it's mostly style and not much substance. **Stephen Jewell**

i Jason Pargin first called himself David Wong as his writing for humour websites was based on his co-workers.



THE EARTH DRAGONS: THE WEARLE

How to train your wearling

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

321 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Chris D'Lacey

► Publisher Orchard Books

◉ Children's author Chris D'Lacey is known for his *Last Dragon Chronicles* and *Dragons Of Wayward Crescent* books. With *The Wearle*, he begins a new series looking at the early arrivals of dragons to a planet they call Erth.

Tragedy befalls the dragon settlement when a new mother is killed, along with her two newborn wearlings. As they argue over who's to blame, a nearby tribe, the Hom, ponders whether to seek revenge for their best hunter, recently killed by the dragons. Meanwhile a young Hom boy, Ren, sneaks over the scorch line that divides the races and becomes part of the conflict in a very literal way.

This is a book of hits and misses: the political intrigues of both societies drive the story, which has a compelling mystery at its heart, and the final climax and reveals are played well. But none of the characters, dragon or human, ever really grip the reader – there are just too many players on the dragon side for any to be fully developed, and neither Ren nor his father Ned make enough of an impression to keep you interested in their fates. **Rhian Drinkwater**

i D'Lacey says Welsh is "the nearest human tongue" to dragon tongue, hence the use of words like "plentynt" (child).

Reviews



MONSTER

The beast within



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

318 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author CJ Skuse

► Publisher MIRA Ink

Having to spend Christmas

at school is a horrifying prospect. Having to spend it with a bunch of misfits you don't know or like is even worse. But for six pupils of Bathory School, it's about to get properly nightmarish. There's a killer on the loose, and the list of suspects includes a convicted murderer and a mysterious black cat known as the Beast of Bathory. Plus the matron has disappeared, along with all their mobile phones, and outside the snow shows no sign of stopping...

Monster piles on the peril until the odds are seriously stacked against the girls – even if they do display Enid Blyton levels of resourcefulness. The mystery is engaging, the relationships between the various different teens are interesting, and there's even a bit of romance thrown in for good measure.

But while it's nice to see a less-than-perfect Young Adult heroine, *Monster's* Nash has some serious flaws that are never really addressed. And just when it looks like she's starting to realise something's wrong, the book comes to a crashing end. It's such an anticlimax that it feels like the last chapter got accidentally deleted and the publishers were hoping that no one would notice.

Sarah Dobbs

Skuse says *Monster* is "my attempt to do an *Assault On Precinct 13*-type story using a school and six schoolgirls."

REISSUES

This month's big paperback debut is Neil Gaiman's **TRIGGER WARNING**

WARNING (★★★★★, 27 October) a collection of stories and verse mostly previously published in anthologies and magazines.



Just one is new: "Black Dog", which centres on a spectral ghost-hound, and revisits the landscape (and hero) of *American Gods*. We said: "An essential purchase for anyone who loves Gaiman's work... he's frequently on top form."

If the notion of space-travelling Roman legionnaires and Incan space stations appeals, you may well enjoy

ULTIMA (★★★★★, out now), Stephen Baxter's



sequel to *Proxima*. Slamming together all the author's recurring obsessions – cosmology,

alternate worlds, alternate history – this end-of-all-worlds tale follows a motley bunch of travellers as they're buffeted around the multiverse. We said: "A hard SF novel that battles bravely with big ideas." Finally, if you're struggling to get sufficient shuteye

then Kenneth Calhoun's **BLACK MOON** (★★★★★, 22 October) will probably



strike a chord; its high concept is that almost the entire population of the world suddenly

loses the ability to sleep. This is no *Attack Of The Insomniac Zombies* though, but serious character drama which aims to say something about the human condition, and which abounds with metaphors and allusions. We said: "A valiant attempt to try something a little different, but the plot meanders listlessly... it'd benefit from a caffeine injection."

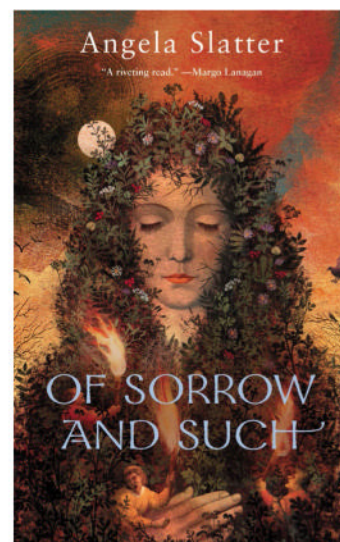
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The Last Witness

October 6th, 2015

When you can't trust your memories, erase them.



Of Sorrow and Such

October 13th, 2015

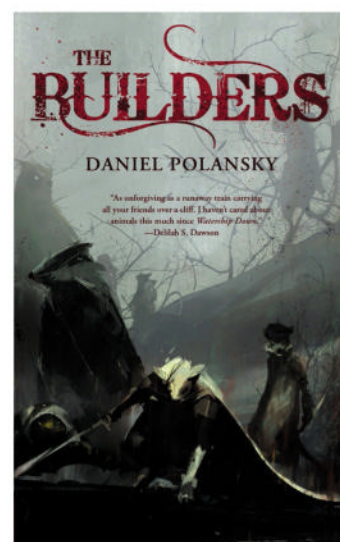
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—Margo Lanagan



Envy of Angels

October 20th, 2015

Where devils on horseback are the clients, not the dish.



The Builders

November 11th, 2015

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FUTURISTIC VIOLENCE & FANCY SUITS

by David Wong

An outrageously hilarious, horrific and rollicking sci-fi thriller from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *John Dies at the End*.

In the near-future, Zoey, a recent college graduate with a worthless degree, is blissfully unaware of a dangerous man stalking her, a man with superhuman abilities and gruesomely violent tendencies...

If she had known she was being stalked by a man who intended to kill her and then slowly eat her bones, she would have worried more about that and less about getting her cat off the roof.

Said cat was on said roof because it was terrified of the Santa Claus hologram in the front yard, a tacky Christmas decoration Zoey's mother had brought home from Walmart two weeks ago. Everybody else in the trailer park had them, so she apparently had felt pressured to demonstrate her Christmas

spirit with this dead-eyed apparition that unenthusiastically said "HO-HO-HO-MERRY CHRISTMAS" in a flat robotic voice to anyone who approached. Zoey thought it was a little unsettling herself, but every time the cat saw it blink to life, he would hiss and go streaking off to some high place where he thought the translucent bearded devil couldn't reach him. So that's why on the evening of December 16, Zoey was standing in the snow trying to coax the cat off of the roof while, just a block away, a man was waiting to abduct her and stream her slow mutilation to half a million viewers.

For eight hours, Zoey's pursuer had been staking out the trailer where the twenty-two-year-old lived with her mother, waiting for the most dramatic moment to make his appearance. Catching Zoey in bed or the shower would be optimal, but he got the sense that this particular young woman had no rigid schedule for doing either of those things. All day he had been watching her through a dirty bay window that put their trailer's whole, sad living room on display.

The Author



→ David Wong is the pseudonym of Jason Pargin, *New York Times* bestselling author and Executive Editor of the hugely popular comedy site *Cracked.com*. His first book, *John Dies at the End*, began as a webserial on his own website *Pointless Waste of Time*, which was read by around 70,000 people. David tweets to over 13,000 followers as @JohnDiesattheEn.

Zoey had begun her day promptly at one pm by waking up on the sofa and initiating a "morning" routine that involved going to the bathroom, returning to the sofa, and then staring blankly at the ceiling for an hour. Then she read for a bit, ate a bowl of cereal, and did something with her hair that involved wrapping part of it in tinfoil while a nature documentary about pack hunters played on the TV behind her. Now the sun had gone down and Zoey, still in her pajamas, was standing in her yard and yelling up at a cat that had jumped onto the roof. Her stalker had intended to send the news media a video of his entire pursuit of the girl, but he knew that this part would have to be edited way down.

He was out of patience. He resolved to move in for the kill and even switched on the tiny camera he kept pinned to his lapel, so his fans could watch it live. But then, at the last moment, he had second thoughts. Mainly about branding.

The man had called himself "The Jackal" for most of his short but prolific career, but had decided to switch to "The Hyena" after watching a pack of them tear apart a moose during the documentary that

had played on Zoey's television earlier. He thought it was more fitting – hyenas were wild, unpredictable predators and had the most powerful jaws in the animal kingdom (that last part was what had really sold him on it). But then again, the documentary seemed to show them only hunting in groups (where he was definitely a loner) and, unless he misunderstood, the female hyenas had penises, and even gave birth through them. That was a problem – when he became famous and the press started speculating on why he chose that moniker, he didn't want pundits throwing around a bunch of wild theories about his genitals. But if he amended his manifesto to address the issue, or included photographic evidence that he had a normal penis, then that would just make *him* seem like the weirdo for bringing it up. Maybe "The Wolf" was a better name. Or "The Shark."

As he sat in his rental car and wrestled with this decision, Zoey went inside the trailer, then returned dragging a kitchen chair through the door. She tried to use it as a step stool to reach the cat on the roof, at which point she immediately overbalanced and fell off, landing hard in the snow. She gathered herself, brushed snow off her butt, mounted the chair again, and searched in vain for a cat that, unbeknownst to her, had already jumped down the other side of the trailer. This went on for a very long time, before Zoey finally noticed the cat was not on the roof, but rather lying in the snow under the very chair she was standing on. Exasperated, the girl trudged back inside cradling the cat with one arm and dragging the chair with the other. The Shark ("The Piranha"?) decided he would wait for her to get settled again, then make his move.

Instead, Zoey reappeared at the door and headed for the old and busted Toyota Furia in her driveway. Her stalker wasn't worried about losing her if she left – the advantage of self-driving cars for a man in The Piranha's line of work was that their navigation systems were very easy to latch on to. He could just set his own to follow the same route and the car would do the tailing for him – he could literally stalk the girl while relaxing and playing a game on his phone. He watched as Zoey scraped frost from the Toyota's windshield with what appeared to be a spatula, and then pulled out of her driveway, leaving behind a dark rectangle in the snow as if the car had forgotten to take its shadow with it. The Piranha gave her a ten-second head start, and then told his rental car to follow. He tried to picture the headlines that would tick along the bottom of the news feeds next week, like, "The Piranha Claims His Sixth Victim." Hmmm, maybe "The Leopard" would be better. It needed to be some kind of biting animal, otherwise the surgery would have been a waste.

He rubbed the itchy line of stitches that ran from one temple to the other, looping under his jawbone like a chin strap. He'd had his entire lower jaw and upper teeth augmented with a motorized black market implant consisting of a graphene lattice frame and titanium chompers that could bite through metal. As soon as he had gotten home from the surgery, he had turned on his camera and announced his new powers to the world by biting through a hunk of copper pipe. He thought it made for an ominous demonstration of his new abilities, even if he'd had to quickly turn off the camera at that point because he had cut up his tongue pretty badly. No matter – the jaws worked, and his next test would be on Zoey Ashe's fingers. Then he'd just chew his way up from there.

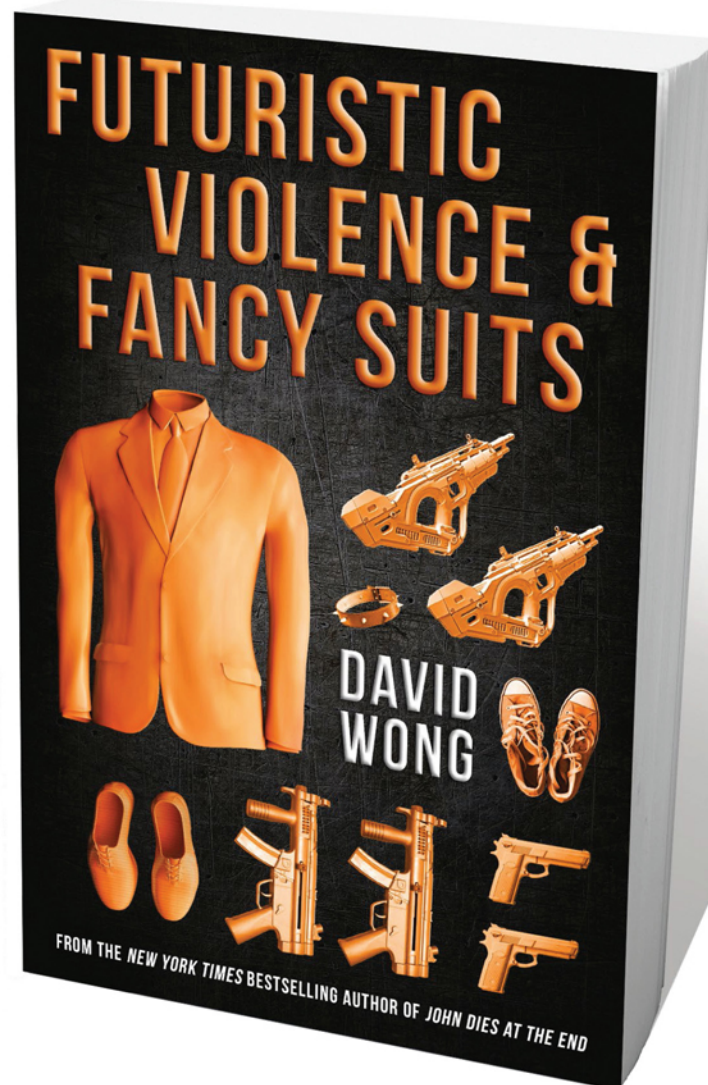
This, he thought, was what he had always been missing: a gimmick.

She made a left turn, then another. Circling

“The girl surely could sense the predator lurking behind her...”

the block. Did she suspect she was being followed? The Leopard would have to be careful – prey animals were weak, but alert and wary. The girl surely could sense the malevolent predator that lurked behind her in the darkness... ●

To find out what happens next, pick up *Futuristic Violence & Fancy Suits*, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com



STAR WARS: LANDO

Before the Empire struck back

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Marvel

► Writer Charles Soule

► Artist Alex Maleev

ISSUES 1-3 **Marvel's bold**

reinvention of the *Star Wars* comics line is continuing to grow, and alongside the two flagship monthly titles, we're also getting character-centric miniseries that give specific cast members a moment in the sun. The recently concluded Princess Leia story was an example of tie-in comics at their best, and the standard remains high in the latest five-issue adventure as the spotlight shifts onto everyone's favourite smooth-talking duplicitous rogue from Cloud City, Lando Calrissian.

Set before the events of *The*

Empire Strikes Back, this is a highly enjoyable heist-goes-wrong tale following the life of Lando before he set up shop in Cloud City. It starts with a criminal debt that just won't go away. In order to clear it once and for all, Lando has to assemble a team for a seemingly simple job to hijack a plush pleasure craft from an Imperial spacedock. All goes fine – until they discover the spaceship in question belongs to Emperor Palpatine, and he's left some nasty surprises on board...

The writing talent Marvel has hired for its *Star Wars* titles has been impressive and here they've made a great choice with the prolific Charles Soule, who brings the same kind of wit and edge to these first three issues that he added to his criminally under-read recent run on *She-Hulk*.

Soule's version of Lando captures the correct mix of suave charm and slipperiness, while he also adds unexpected depth to the relationship between Lando and his cybernetically-enhanced sidekick Lobot. Even the supporting characters are given strong, distinctive moments, and the pacey dialogue crackles with energy throughout. There's no disguising that the plot is very much a traditional tale of criminals in over their heads, but Soule makes it feel fresh enough that the familiarity barely matters.

It also helps that he has artist Alex Maleev on the visuals, pulling off a welcome depth and grit. Maleev is best known for his work

“The pacey dialogue crackles with energy throughout”

on street-level Marvel comics like *Daredevil*, and here he uses plenty of darkness and shadow to give the story a noir-ish atmosphere. He also handles the action sequences with style, while colourist Paul Mounts does equally impressive work, utilising a vivid palate of blues and reds to conjure up a lush, pulpy sci-fi vibe.

This could easily have been a throwaway, forgettable romp, but instead Soule and Maleev have delivered a tightly structured sci-fi crime caper. The tone fits perfectly with the darker style of *The Empire Strikes Back*, and the end result is a thoroughly satisfying journey into the more dangerous edges of the *Star Wars* universe.

Saxon Bullock

i A five-issue Chewbacca miniseries has just launched, and December brings a C-3PO story which explains his new red arm...



They were gonna need a bigger fly swat.

INTRO TO ALIEN INVASION

Bugs in the system

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Simon & Schuster

► Writers Owen King, Mark Jude

Poirier

► Artist Nancy Ahn

GRAPHIC NOVEL **Alien invaders**

sure do love an isolated community, don't they? In this case it's Fenton College, a campus out in the Vermont woodland, and the invaders are tiny bugs which grow inside a human host. It's spring break and many students have been stranded on campus by a hurricane, including Stacey Kepler, an astrobiology major with a keen interest in ETs.

In traditional style, the story proceeds from infection, through outbreak and then to the battle for survival. Along the way there's some thoroughly entertaining gross-out body horror – this is where Nancy Ahn's artwork comes into its own, her stylised lines mutating in unexpected ways.

However, it's generally predictable – you know exactly who'll survive and who won't. Aside from Stacey, the characters are quite sketchily written, especially the fratboys and WASP girls who are all relentless assholes until they meet their fate, making it hard to care about them. Still, even they're more rounded than the group of characters who suddenly become prominent in the final third, but aren't properly named. Okay, but just too straightforward. **Eddie Robson**

i Co-writer Owen King is the youngest son of Stephen King. He's working on a top secret TV project at the moment.





Trigger happy. Well, not too unhappy.

WE STAND ON GUARD

Invasion USA



★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Image Comics**

► Writer **Brian K Vaughan**

► Artist **Steve Skroce**

ISSUES 1-3 If **Brian K Vaughan** doesn't write a *Star Wars* script soon, we're going to be sadder than Chewbacca on bathday.

Saga proved he can handle inter-alien relationships; now he's tackling terrorist underdog heroes taking on technologically advanced colonists in a sci-fi war. Except here it's Canada against an invading America.

Taking the genius – and scientifically plausible – approach that climate change will force a barren USA to plunder other countries for water like they once did oil, this six-issue miniseries tracks tough-female lead Amber's journey from innocent child to hardened freedom fighter.

Vaughan uses techniques he presumably picked up on *Lost*, delivering Amber's story via a mix of present-day action and flashbacks. Meanwhile, artist Steve Skroce uses techniques he must have picked up in heaven – the art on this book is beautiful. The snowy takedown of a towering AT-AT-style robot is an early highlight, while issue three's twisted torture scenes will make you wince with disgust. But, y'know, in a good way.

It's a potent combination. Vaughan may not ever end up writing *Star Wars*, but with Skroce directing his action, maybe we can cope. **Sam Ashurst**

i The name of freedom fighters The Two-Four is a nod to the Canadian slang for a case of (24) beers.



Do fear the Reapers.

DOCTOR WHO: FOUR DOCTORS

Time Lord team-up

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Titan Comics**

► Writer **Paul Cornell**

► Artist **Neil Edwards**

ISSUES 1-4 **Out of all of Doctor**

Who's many storytelling devices, multi-Doctor stories are one of the biggest challenges – they're great fun in principle, but, in the wrong hands, can easily end up as jumbled exercises in showy continuity references. Thankfully, when Titan Comics decided to throw a team-up event across their *Who* titles they asked Paul Cornell to write it, and he's done a great job crafting a big, bold, multiple-incarnation romp.

In this weekly five-issue series (the final instalment of which wasn't available for review thanks to production delays), the story kicks off when Clara discovers a picture of the Tenth and Eleventh Doctors together with the Twelfth – a meeting that might just end the universe. Despite Clara's best efforts, the meeting takes place,

and the Doctors are caught in a trap that connects back to the Time War...

While the plot gets a little convoluted at times, Cornell has pulled off some deft surprises here (including the fact that despite an appearance from John Hurt's War Doctor, the "Four Doctors" line-up isn't what you'd expect). He also perfectly channels the mannerisms of each different incarnation, while using the story to examine the Doctor's character in illuminating ways.

Neil Edwards's art is also lots of fun, striking the right balance between capturing likenesses and giving the story plenty of visual energy. *Four Doctors* may not be quite as focused or polished a multi-Doctor romp as the 50th anniversary special, but Cornell has still accomplished an inventive thrill ride that's recommended reading for dedicated *Who* fans.

Saxon Bullock

i Cornell's next novel, the third in the *Shadow Police* series, is due out in June 2016. It's called *Who Killed Sherlock Holmes?*



No, it's *not* a hairy Tenth Doctor!

DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY

The Gentle Touch

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **IDW Entertainment**

► Writer **Chris Ryall**

► Artists **Tony Akins, Ilias Kryiazis,**

John Livesay, Bob Wiacek

ISSUES 1-3 With his reliance on twists of fate, Douglas Adams' *Holistic Detective* probably isn't the PI for you if you aren't fond of convenient coincidences.

Designed as a prequel to a proposed new TV series, the first issue of Chris Ryall's comic opens with Dirk fetching up in San Diego in the cargo bay of an aircraft. The plot, involving a couple of married serial killers and a pair of ancient vampire mummies, has no real sense of threat, but it's hard not to like Dirk as he bumbles around the city, inadvertently becoming the guide to a group of tourists.

Designed as a fresh start, this first arc is mostly accessible to those who aren't familiar with Dirk's past adventures – although the surprise appearance of a couple of characters will please fans. Opening artist Tony Akins's delicate linework is delightful, and while his successor Ilias Kryiazis's style is cartoonier, it's still a good fit. With Ryall's witty, engaging script neatly emulating Adams's distinctive prose, this is a worthy continuation of the great man's legacy. **Stephen Jewell**

i *Chronicle's* Max Landis (son of John) is lead writer on the TV series IDW is helping to develop for BBC America.

MAD MAX

On the road again



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on Xbox One

► Also on PC, PS4

► Publisher Warner Bros Interactive

VIDEOGAME Walking really should

be obsolete in 2015. We might as well just snap our legs off now and be done with it. Developer Avalanche clearly agrees: a good 90% of *Mad Max* is spent behind the wheel, as Max and freakish sidekick Chumbucket (less Charlize Theron in *Fury Road*, more Charlize Theron in *Monster*) work together to build the “Magnum Opus”, a car capable of crushing all competitors.

The frequent car combat starts rough and intense as you crudely bash rivals off the roads, and gets better with each new tool you unlock, from barbed spikes to the satisfying harpoon gun. And before you get bored, you’ll be dragged

back in with a sniper rifle, or a flamethrower, or a mine-detecting dog. Blow up your car and you’re forced out on foot, exposed to the elements and the bad guys while Chumbucket slowly repairs it – a brilliant gameplay mechanic.

The environment looks great: the sunrise over the desert, the ships and cars you see buried in the desert, the er... nightfall. Over the desert. Okay, variety isn’t a strong point, but the *Mad Max* universe is mostly sand and death and that’s captured well. The quotable lunacy of the world doesn’t fare as well; story-wise the game devolves to endless philosophising about cars, like the world’s most pretentious *Top Gear* episode.

There is at least plenty to do, with oil rigs to blow up, watchtowers to knock down and thirsty moochers begging for your precious water. These tasks can get

“Ignore the walking and keep Max behind the wheel”

a little repetitive, but obsessive collector-types will be in heaven, with a staggering amount of extras to seek and destroy. And *Mad Max* gets a lot right. When you’re roaring through the desert, shooting thugs and smashing cars aside, it’s hard not to start cheering “witness me!” while humming the *Fury Road* theme (you’ll have to do it yourself, as neither appears in the game). Seeing some of the average scores it’s received elsewhere surprised us – we wish this is what an average game played like. Ignore the walking and keep Max behind the wheel, and this is as good a licensed adventure as you could ask for. **Tom Stone**

i The first *Mad Max* game was released for the NES in 1990. It does not come recommended: it’s complete rubbish.



TORCHWOOD: THE CONSPIRACY

New Jack CD



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

73 minutes | CD/Download

► Publisher Big Finish

AUDIO CD What if David Icke

was right? No, not about being the son of God – but his theory that hostile, reptilian forces secretly rule the world.

That’s the premise behind *The Conspiracy*, the first in Big Finish’s new *Torchwood* range. George Wilson (John Sessions) was a respected newsreader until he suffered a breakdown on air. It looked like the end of his career, but he bounced back as an Icke-like guru. Now the public lap up his theories about humanity being controlled by the alien “Committee”. Is he crazy? Captain Jack doesn’t think so. But as he investigates it becomes clear that the truth is more complicated than either of them realise.

While the BBC’s *Torchwood* radio plays were self-contained dramas, Big Finish’s version is telling a larger tale and focusing on a single main character per episode. The casts are small, with the joins just about covered by John Barrowman’s intermittent narration. You notice the gang’s absence, but Barrowman has enough charisma to carry the story. It helps that there’s a few good twists, and a strong sense of a global scale. With future eps taking place in different parts of *Torchwood*’s timeline, this looks set to be a suitably epic adventure. **Will Salmon**

i Episode three, which features Gwen and Rhys, is the first dramatised *Torchwood* yarn set after *Miracle Day*.



Taken that!

DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING

Killing time

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on PS4

► Also on Xbox One, PS3, Xbox 360

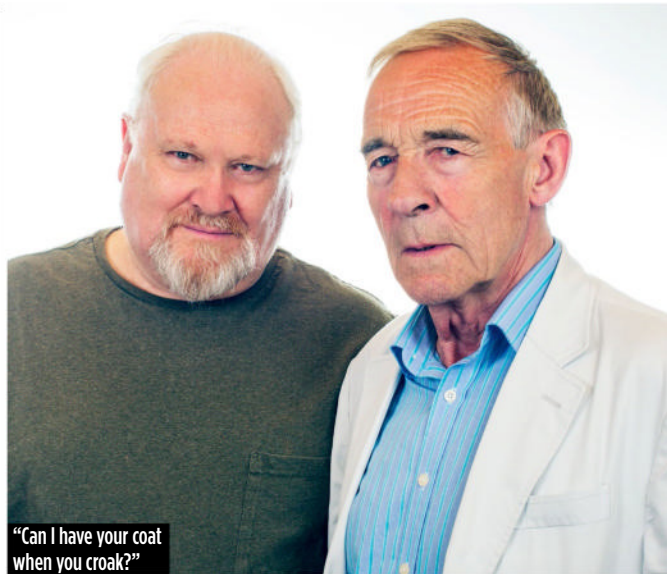
► Publisher Activision

VIDEOGAME Bungie has chipped slowly and delicately away at the complaints levelled against its original *Destiny* release over some 40-odd patches, but with *The Taken King* its intent is clear. Where once fans declared that “*Destiny*’s a great shooter but it has problems,” *The Taken King* is Bungie’s effort to well and truly fix them.

There are actual characters to care about, voiced brilliantly by the likes of Nolan North (of Nathan Drake fame) and Nathan Fillion, whose Cayde-6 offers a refreshing new reason to titter, gasp, and generally ride to wherever *Destiny*’s story-coaster wants to take you. There’s always a string of Missions, Strikes, Patrols, kill quotas or other unique activities you can commit to at any time, rather than just repeating the same content again and again hoping for that one lucky loot drop.

The levelling system has been tweaked, the loot boosted and delivered at a satisfying rate, and when the Taken show up – the screen warping and undulating with their arrival – you know you’re in for a fight. Boil away all the stats, nerfs, and patches – the sheer variety of challenge is what every *Destiny* devotee has always wanted. **Matt Sakuraoka-Gilman**

i Peter Dinklage’s performance as Ghost in the original was so decided that he’s been replaced by Nolan North.



“Can I have your coat when you croak?”

DOCTOR WHO: THE LAST ADVENTURE

Six’s final outing

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

250 minutes | CD/download

► Publisher Big Finish

AUDIO CD Of all the ways in

which the Sixth Doctor got a raw deal in his televisual era, one of the most galling is that, thanks to Colin Baker being fired from the role, he’s the only Doctor to never get a proper finale: bumping his head at the start of 1987’s “Time And The Rani” is hardly a dramatic cause for regeneration. Big Finish have set out to change that with this box set, a quartet of one-hour episodes designed to give Baker’s Doctor the last hurrah he deserves.

To mark the occasion, they’ve pitched him against the evil alternate incarnation of the Doctor known as the Valeyard (Michael Jayston). However, they’ve also presented these stories as four separate adventures, each with a different companion, meaning that a lot of *The Last Adventure* plays more like a loosely structured anthology than a grand climax.

This isn’t helped by some early wobbles – *End Of The Line* has engagingly creepy moments but is nearly sunk by overwritten dialogue, while *The Red House* mixes bizarre accents with excessive overacting. *Stage Fright* is a routine but fun Victorian romp helped by the presence of spin-off characters Jago and Litefoot, and it’s only in *The Brink Of Death* that everything clicks and the box set finally gives us a tense, gripping climax.

Baker is on top form throughout, and Jayston also gives an impressive performance, even though the Valeyard remains a messily-conceived villain who only becomes truly scary in *The Brink Of Death*. The final episode is a well-crafted, genuinely fitting finale for Baker, and could easily have been expanded, making it a shame that *The Last Adventure* spends so much time feeling like a lengthy, slightly rambling prologue. **Saxon Bullock**

i Colin Baker’s Doctor is reunited with another old nemesis this month, in two-CD release *Planet Of The Rani*.



SPHERO BB-8

You’ll have a ball

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Available on iOS, Android

► Manufacturer Sphero

► Buy it from www.firebox.com

(£129.99)

APP-ENABLED DROID Blurring the

line between toy and functioning droid, this is the *Star Wars* accessory every kid will want this Christmas – whether they’re four or 40. Ridiculously fun, endearingly cute and intriguing of physics, Sphero’s remote-controlled rolling replica pretty much secures BB-8’s early status as the breakout star of *The Force Awakens*.

Once you’ve downloaded the app that turns your smartphone into a Bluetooth controller, BB-8’s interface is easy to use, whether you’re sending the droid around the room or making it nod.

Look beyond your inevitable sense of wonder, however, and BB-8 isn’t perfect. While easy to control on carpet, it’s rather unpredictable on a wooden floor. The voice recognition is unreliable; it’s no friend of your iPhone’s battery life; and while the augmented reality “Message” function that recreates “Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi”-style projections is a fun idea, it’s doesn’t seem likely you’d want to use it more than a few times.

Still, it is a truly innovative piece of kit, and because BB-8’s software will be updated, the toy can only get better. This is (just about) the droid you’re looking for. **Richard Edwards**

i Ralph McQuarrie designed an early version of R2-D2 who ran on a giant ball bearing – a proto-BB-8.



COLLECTABLES

This month, it's a *Star Wars* special!

1 Strap Hasbro's **Chewbacca electronic mask** (FPI price £35.99; product code D3607) to your head, open your gob, and the mask lets out an authentic Chewie growl/howl/yawn. Open your mouth wider and the noise gets louder and angrier! Fantastic! It'll work best if you have a child-sized face – or are, indeed, a child. Gah, why didn't

these exist back in 1977? Also available: two Kylo Ren masks (one's a voice-changer) and a First Order Stormtrooper one.

2 The glimpse of Kylo Ren's funky, triple-bladed lightsaber became one of the most talkworthy points in the first *Force Awakens* trailer. Now Hasbro have made this **Electronic**

Lightsaber (FPI price £39.99; product code D3601), allowing you to skulk mysteriously in snowy wastes to your twisted heart's content. It lights up, makes authentic sounds – satisfyingly, it growls like a bastard – and as it's part of the Blade Builder range you can bolt it together with bits of other lightsabers to create your own custom-built weaponry.

3 Kylo Ren's lightsaber may be deadly up close, but if you want to put some distance between you and your prey there's nothing's better than this **NERF Chewbacca Bowcaster** (FPI price £29.99; product code D3602). It's a sturdy piece of weaponry, simple to construct and uses an elasticated string to propel foam projectiles up to 20m away. The neon orange is a little garish, though. Also available: two NERF Stormtrooper blasters, for epic First Order vs Resistance battles.

4 BB-8 is arguably the most photo-real figure in Funko's range of **Pop! Vinyl Figures** (FPI price £9.99 each;

All products are available at

forbiddenplanet
international
home shopping

www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk
01621 877 222

Reviews



product codes D3408, D3409, D3411, D3416, D3417, D3411), but it is kind of hard to caricature a ball. Rey, Finn, Captain Phasma and the Stormtrooper are just as you'd expect, but Kylo Ren is apparently channelling Dark Helmet from Spaceballs. Rick Moranis, are you in there? There are five other figures: Poe Dameron, Chewbacca, red-armed C-3PO and a couple more breeds of Stormtrooper.

5 You don't need power harpoons to bring down this **Remote-Control AT-AT** (FPI price £94.99; product code D3949); lay some thin carpet in its path and it's stumbling about like a new-born fawn. It looks much more impressive on a

smooth, hard surface, though, and the ability to programme different "action combos" is a neat touch. It's just one of 11 remote-control craft from Thinkway Toys, including a very cool Millennium Falcon drone.

6 If Lego was the only material the First Order had available to build a fleet of spaceships, they'd have decided the whole galactic domination thing was too much hard work and stayed home. They'd have had fun trying, however, as this 1,004-piece **Command Shuttle** (FPI price £99.99; product code C5255) is an incredibly satisfying build, taking several hours. It comes with retractable wings and projectile weapons. There are six other sets,

ranging from Rey with a Speeder Bike (193 pieces) to a massive Millennium Falcon (1,332 pieces).

7 The "interactive" element of this **Kylo Ren Animatronic Interactive Figure** (FPI price £119.99; product code D3932) – one of a range of six – isn't that exciting. Press his chest to enter "training mode", then waggle his little lightsaber around. Depending on how quickly/smoothly you do so, he responds with dialogue which may make you feel uncomfortably like he's trying to get in your pants: "You know what I've come for... I feel it too... Don't fight it. You know you can't." Sorry Kylo, we're just not that into you. ●

THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



3D DECO LIGHTS

◆ Living room tediously intact? Manufacturers 3DlightFX can fix that. They're adding BB-8, an X-Wing fighter and Kylo Ren's bonce to their range; each comes with crack-simulating stickers to make it look like something's smashing its way through your wall.



BLUEPRINT MUGS

◆ Our favourite *Episode VII* mugs bear blueprints of the Millennium Falcon, an X-Wing and Black Squadron/Special Forces TIE Fighters. All four feature classy artwork and coloured interiors. An espresso set using the same designs is also coming out.



BOILED EGG SHAPERS

◆ Slap a hard-boiled egg into one of these, squeeze, and it'll come out looking like R2-D2 or the head of C-3PO/Vader/a Stormtrooper! Manufacturers Kotobukiya are also bringing us a pair of chopsticks shaped like Kylo Ren's lightsaber!

DAUGHTERS UNTO DEVILS *by Amy Lukavics*

Prepare for unputdownable thrills in this blockbuster horror film in book form. Think *Little House On The Prairie* meets *The Exorcist*!

With guilty secrets weighing down on her, sixteen-year-old Amanda Verner can't be sure if the true evil lies in the land, or within her soul...

“**E**verybody, welcome to our new homestead!”
Ma frowns. I can't help but wonder that if at any point, between the disappointment of the second cabin and the children beginning to cry every night about their hatred for camping, perhaps Pa had considered that taking the word of a couple of farmers about how much opportunity this land held might not have been the cleverest idea.

Joanna and Charles begin to cheer at the mention of the word homestead. Blackjack and Peter, the ox, gain a sudden burst of energy, as if they know that their bones will finally be able to properly rest if they just finish it now, and the wagon begins to glide effortlessly through the prairie. As we gain speed we begin to bump, softly at first but increasingly violently as the wheels tear over animal holes and thick bunches of field grass. I fold my arms over my middle in an effort to keep things as still as possible.

“Slow down,” Ma nearly yells and throws her

hand over the upset sunbonnet on her head. “It’s not going anywhere.”

“It’s beautiful, isn’t it?” Pa cries out in response, without slowing down. “At last, at last!”

But the dreamy vision of the cabin fades as we draw closer. It becomes painfully clear when we pull up that the yard and surrounding area are in need of some serious work. The bark from the logs is peeling away from the wood as if the cabin is shedding. Weeds have overgrown everything, spreading hungrily over the ground, the bottom perimeter of the cabin, even covering an old busted wheelbarrow that sits behind the fence.

The fence itself is more of just a frame, really. Long pieces of broken wood tilt diagonally away from the posts and disappear into the grasses below. Extra pieces are piled nearby, though not nearly enough to finish the project, also covered in weeds. Sweat rolls down my neck and soaks into the collar of my already ruined dress.

“Beautiful, indeed,” Ma remarks. “It looks like nobody has lived here for years.”

“The weeds grow quickly out here, Susan.” Pa sighs, clearly aggravated at her lack of fervor. He pulls the reins in, and Blackjack and Peter slow to a stop in front of the new cabin. “They’ll only take one good workday to get rid of. And I’ll be able to scrape all that bark off

The Author



→ Amy Lukavics lurks within the forested mountains of Prescott, Arizona, along with her husband and two children. When she isn't reading or writing creepy stories, she enjoys cooking, crafting, and playing videogames. She prefers sour candy over chocolate and is a contributor to @yahighway. You can follow her at @amylukavics on Twitter. *Daughters unto Devils* is her debut novel.

with my draw knife, and re-clay the gaps between the logs...”

Joanna and Charles jump from the wagon as soon as it stops. They run around the new yard like wild ones, cheering and screaming with their arms flapping around their heads. A couple of nearby rabbits flee in a wide-eyed frenzy. I get out and stretch gratefully, careful to hide my swollen abdomen away from my parents so they don't take notice.

Let this be my place to start anew, I think as I look again to the horizon of trees. For me and for the baby.

I stop.

The baby, not *my* baby. Even in my deepest thoughts I cannot feel grateful for it, and this fills me with shame. “Who cares if we have to fix it up, Ma?” Emily says from behind me, pulling me from my thoughts. She heads through the weeds to the front door of the cabin.

“Look at the size of it!”

Ma and I follow Emily while Pa tends to the animals, eager to see the inside, as well. Hannah sits on Ma's hip, lowering her

hands to glide over the tips of the grasses poking up from below. As we approach the door, it's difficult to ignore the putrid stench that seems to be growing heavier with each step.

“Ugh,” I say and pinch my nose. “What is that?”

It's too much for Hannah. She begins to

scream, clawing into the air as if she wants to swim out of Ma's arms and away from the door, and we're forced to wait in the odor while Ma runs to set the baby in the back of the wagon so she can crawl around over the blankets.

Emily doesn't even look at me.

The sun pounds down on us and the prairie, and I realize that never in my life have I bore witness to weather this hot. And isn't it supposed to be autumn right now? I wonder if the stench is a dead animal roasting somewhere in the staggering heat. Hopefully the body isn't inside the cabin.

Ma rejoins us, and her face twists up again in reaction to the smell. She steps in front of Emily and opens the front door. The sight that greets us is silencing. My stomach breaks out in gooseflesh, despite the sweltering heat.

The cabin's hardwood floor has been completely torn out, and pokes jaggedly inward at the edges. Weeds and dirt and dead grass floor the entire inside, and the light from the open doorway prompts dozens of grasshoppers to fly through the air. Various pieces of furniture, most of them broken, lay scattered over the ground.

There is a dark substance, a stinking liquid that covers the entire edge of the torn out floor. As much as I don't want to believe it, I know that the liquid is, unquestionably, blood. There is more of it splattered up the sides of the peeling bark walls, and a broken chair amongst the wreckage is also ruined with the red. Fat black flies the size of coins buzz against the filthy glass window that lines the back wall.

As terrible as the sight is, as positively jarring, it is *nothing* compared to the smell. Emily and Ma and I recoil and groan, our arms over our faces as we peer into the mess of a cabin. It is the smell of rot, thick and warm, it is the unmistakable smell of death. And it is heavy.

"What in Heaven's name?"

Ma manages.

"Why aren't you going inside?" Pa calls from the front of the wagon, where he holds a bucket for Peter to drink from. "What's it like?"

"Come over here," Ma yells back. "See for yourself."

The edge to her voice causes Pa's smile to die away in a second. He steps over a piece of broken fence to meet us after

checking on Hannah in the back of the wagon. His eyes squint in rage as he takes in the condition of the cabin.

"What in the Hell?" he growls, and Ma doesn't even scold him for the curse. He steps inside, and we all follow.

"What happened here?" Emily asks, her voice meek. I look to the nearest corner of the cabin only to find that it's been filled by pillars of dense spider webbing. "Pa, I think that this is blood. It looks like..."

"I know what it looks like," Pa snaps, his face flat. "Somebody must have slaughtered an ox or horse in here."

"But why would they do it inside?" Ma says. "This cabin is completely ruined! We cannot settle here."

"It's *not* ruined." Pa frantically begins picking up the old furniture, most of the pieces completely caked with the dried blood, and tossing them out the front door. "We can remove all of the soiled items, and remove the bark from the wall with my draw knife. And I'll build a new floor."

“As much as I don’t want to believe it, I know that the liquid is, unquestionably, blood”

"With what supplies?" Ma challenges. "And what money?"

"I'll find a way to arrange it," Pa promises. "We can camp outside until I get it fixed. We're almost at the end of the map that was drawn for me on the mountain. The nearby settlement should only be a day or so away to the west. I can leave tomorrow."

"You don't even know if the settlement will be there!" Ma is starting to get teary. Emily and

I remain silent. "They also said there would be 'plenty' of decent homesteads that were unoccupied, as well. Whoever drew up that map could have misremembered, they could be sending you out into the wilderness to die, or it could take you days—"

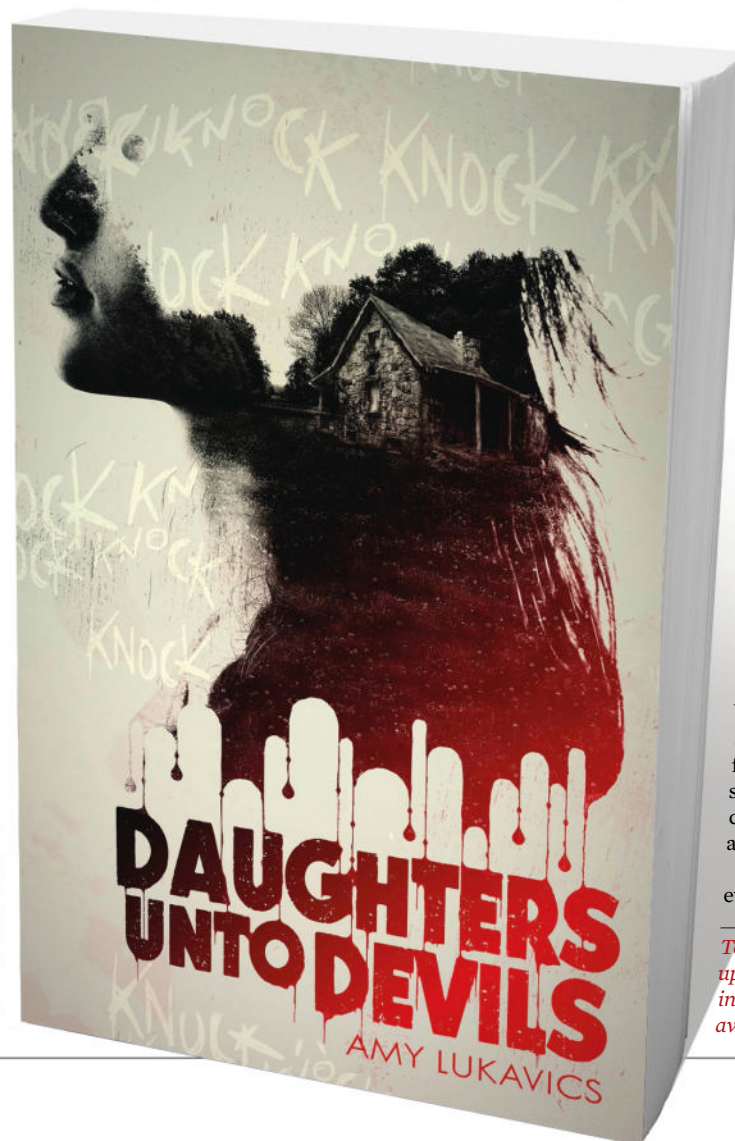
"Susan." The tone of Pa's voice is dangerous enough to silence her outburst instantly. "You will camp outside with the children until I return, and then I'll fix the floor and the walls and you'll wonder what you ever had to complain about in the first place."

How heavy his desperation must be, if he is willing himself and the rest of us to accept the condition of this cabin. "It will be hard work," he continues, "but the Lord will smile upon us for it."

I watch Pa work to move the broken furniture out to be burned. Here is my new home, my place to begin clean, a place that is rotted and overheated and covered in filth. I've never heard of anybody slaughtering an animal inside their cabin before. It's almost fitting, in a sense.

I'm starting to believe that Hell is everywhere. ●

To find out what happens next, pick up Daughters unto Devils, out now in all good bookshops. It's also available digitally.





SEASON 5

FALLING SKIES

Mason Goes To Hell

► **UK Broadcast** Fox, finished
► **US Broadcast** TNT, finished
► **Episodes Reviewed** 5.01-5.10

🔴 **It's quite impressive that** *Falling Skies* lasted five seasons, given that not many people would name it their favourite SF/fantasy show. For those who did hang on in there until the bitter end, the final 10 episodes are pretty consistently entertaining – albeit often on a fairly superficial level. Barring the aptly-named “Respite” (though “Longueur” would also have worked) every episode delivers on the action front, and in between the machine-gun battles

the human-resistance-vs-alien-invaders show is still capable of tossing in a new twist – such as piranha-like mutant insects, or alien-controlled doppelgangers.

Falling Skies certainly can't be accused of failing to develop over its lifespan – though a revolving door policy on showrunners explains that. David Eick, final incumbent of the big chair, previously worked on *Battlestar Galactica* and brought some of that show's moral greyness with him. For *BSG* fans it's impossible not to watch episodes like “Everyone Has Their Reasons” and “Stalag 14th Virginia” – in which the

Second Mass discover surviving military forces, but soon find delight turning to disillusionment – without thinking of Admiral Cain and the crew of the Pegasus.

Nowhere is this evolution from family-friendly fare more apparent than in the figure of resistance leader Tom Mason, who began the series as a paragon of virtue and ends it as the sort of man who has no qualms about torturing an alien prisoner for information. It's a remarkable transformation, and Noah Wyle does a good job of projecting the damaged psyche of a man brutalised but not beaten by his experiences.

ZOOM IN



IT'S WOSSISNAME! ▲

→ Jeff Fahey, criminally underused as Vietnam vet Enos in the final episode, was pilot Frank Lapidus in *Lost*.

BEST EPISODE

→ Can we consider “Everyone Has Their Reasons”/“Stalag 14th Virginia” a two-parter? It has “how the hell will they get out of this one?” appeal.

TRIVIA

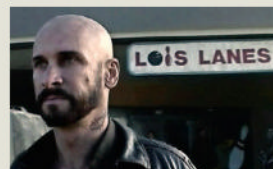
→ As originally outlined, the finale ended on an ominous note, with the camera zooming back down to the Lincoln Memorial to show “that little Dornia critter pattering off into the night.”

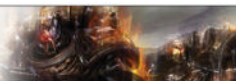
BEST MOMENT

→ When Mason shoots Pope in “Non-Essential Personnel”; it arrives so abruptly that it feels authentic, and confirms they *won't* be kissing and making up this time.

DID YOU SPOT? ▼

→ The puntastic name of the bowling alley Pope makes his base: Lois Lanes! It's a real alley (now disused) in Richmond, British Columbia.





"Don't worry, we've conveniently written out the eye-worms."

This final run also puts more emphasis on inter-human conflict, with ex-crim John Pope setting his sights on Mason after a leadership decision sees the woman he loves die. Pope was sometimes portrayed as a loveable rogue, but year five remembers that he's a very dangerous man, and the episodes centred on his monomaniac quest for vengeance are among the strongest; given licence to turn the "psycho" dial up to 11, actor Colin Cunningham has a ball. It's a shame, then, that the writing team seem to lose confidence in this conflict. It's left on the backburner too long; when it returns to the fore it's dealt with perfunctorily, and the character goes out with a whimper, not a blaze of violence. It feels like a massive cop-out – just like the ease with which a major character death is magically reversed.

Compared to, say, *The Walking Dead*, *Falling Skies* is annoyingly keen on clicking the undo button.

Season five's biggest disappointment, however, is the way the Espheni are finally defeated. Multiple militias march

“It can't be accused of failing to develop over its lifespan”

on Washington for a final battle, but it falls to Tom Mason alone to save the day. We can just about swallow the notion that killing the Espheni queen will take down her entire race but the fact that Tom's handed the necessary bio-weapon by yet another alien species undercuts any sense that this is a triumph for human courage and ingenuity, as does the ease with which it's accomplished – seriously, the queen isn't guarded by a single Skitter? For those who faithfully followed all 52 episodes, it's a little galling to see the war finally won in scenes that play out like a videogame character taking on an end-of-level boss. Ah well. Game over. **Ian Berriman**



"How come we never tried eating a Skitter before?"

Viewscreen

★ BEST IN SHOW ★
The characters who make TV great



CHOPPER

R2-D2's not-so-cuddly cousin in *Star Wars Rebels*

► UK Broadcast Disney XD ► US Broadcast Disney XD

For fans who love *Star Wars*, but were too put off by the prequels to get invested in *The Clone Wars*, *Rebels* has been something of a revelation. It's amazing how simply tweaking the iconography – bringing back "proper" Stormtroopers and Imperial uniforms and TIE Fighters – instantly makes the show feel more "Star Warsy". It's also a bit of a shame, as *The Clone Wars*, particularly in its later years, was actually very good. But we digress...

Rebels has a strong cast of characters. They're all riffs on familiar archetypes, but just twisted enough to make them interesting. Kanan is the Obi-Wan figure, but because of the Order 66 Jedi purge, he never finished his training and is wracked with self-doubt. Ezra is the feisty young pupil, part Luke Skywalker in his eagerness to learn the ways of the Force, and part Han Solo in his recklessness. And

then there's Chopper...

C1-10P, to give him his true name, is a beaten up old Astromech droid who's been bolted together from various scavenged spare parts. He's an obvious analogue of loveable R2-D2. Chopper, though, is very different.

Where Artoo tries to help, and seems to care, Chopper has an attitude. He's grumpy, selfish and just as likely to cause the crew of the Ghost trouble as he is to get them out of it. Plus he's funny, without being annoying and loveable without being too cutesy.

That's not to say that he doesn't come in useful and help out the rebels – he does. But he's not a shiny, happy freedom fighter. He's on the Ghost because he has nowhere else to go.

Executive Producer Dave Filoni has said, "If Artoo is your favourite dog, then Chopper is a cat". What can I say? I was always a cat person. **Will Salmon**

The Alice Cooper tribute starts here!



SEASON 2

THE STRAIN

Vampires take over New York. Very slowly

► **UK Broadcast** Watch, Wednesdays
► **US Broadcast** FX, finished
► **Episodes Reviewed** 2.01-2.09

🔴 **Vampires** – even the mightily-tongued Strigoi version in *The Strain* – live for centuries, so they're not going to hurry themselves when it comes to taking over a city like New York. Which is fine for them, but it can be a bit of a strain (sorry) for viewers.

Season one of this TV version of Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's book trilogy adapted the first novel. The second novel, however, is being stretched over two seasons and often it's all too obvious. Momentarily, as the season opens with our heroes having wounded but not defeated head vampire the Master, this more leisurely approach to plotting

seems like it might be a boon. As former CDC agents Eph and Nora, along with hacker Dutch, ratcatcher Fet and vampire hunter Setrakian plot anew how to defeat the vampire menace from their hideout, there are some effective character moments, deepening their relationships and making the team dynamics more natural.

That lasts about one episode before everyone goes back to being a collection of trotted-out-weekly personality traits and it's up to the gore and the scheming vampires to keep things interesting.

On a gore level the show remains commendably innovative and stomach-churning. Barely an episode goes by without a couple of full-on gross-out moments: spider-kids sliced in half; a vampire corpse sculpture; endless

wormy ickiness; and many, many, many beheadings.

But the squabbling vampires serving the Master seem to spend more time rubbing each other up the wrong way than getting on with taking over the world. The Master takes forever getting over his ailment. The humans' plot to create a plague goes on for yonks. And all the while you're supposed to care about whether Eph's now-vampire wife will turn his bratty son. Which you don't.

There are great moments when the action becomes a kind of ballet in viscera, and the mythology fuelling the show remains powerful and enticing. But too many random new characters and dead-end subplots leave season two feeling bloated and gassy like a decaying corpse. **Dave Golder**

ZOOM IN



TRIVIA ▲

→ Episode nine features a special one-off, full title sequence with animated art by Remy Gente to mark "The Battle Of Red Hook".

MORE TRIVIA

→ The prologue that opens the season – a dark fairytale-esque flashback to how Josef Sardu became the Master – was directed by Guillermo del Toro.

IT'S WOSSIPNAME!

→ Max Charles, who replaces Ben Hyland as Eph's son Zach, played the young Peter Parker in *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012).

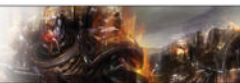


BEST MOMENT ▲

→ The arrival of Quinlan in episode 2.07 ("The Born"), partly because he kicks ass, partly because fans have been waiting for him.

DID YOU SPOT?

→ After an episode of ingesting vampire worms to say young, Setrakian tucks into a plate of... spaghetti. Not very nice.



LINE UP

The month's most quotable dialogue

AGENT COULSON

"Is this still cagey banter or are we being honest all of a sudden?"

Agents Of SHIELD,
Episode 3.01



JD RICHTER

"Did you give me your blood...? Were you going to tell me, or wait until my eyes lit up when I was shaving?"

Extant, Episode 2.13



ALICIA CLARK

"This game [Monopoly] is evil, kindergarten capitalism."

Fear The Walking Dead,
Episode 1.03



THOMAS EICHHORST

"You are demanding that the Master come here and release his own divine and invaluable ascendance just so you can continue fornicating with your secretary? I will pass along the message."

The Strain,
Episode 2.10



MISSY

"I love killing clever clogs. They make the best faces."

Doctor Who,
Episode 9.02



SCRIPT EASE

A TV season distilled

SEASON 5

TEEN WOLF

Spooky surgeons disrupt the pack



► UK Broadcast TBC

► US Broadcast MTV, finished

► Episodes Reviewed 5.01-5.10

SCOTT

Graduation looming. I feel sad.

STILES

I feel sad too. The end of an era. I bet this is the beginning of the end of a wonderful bromance.

SCOTT and STILES hug.

STILES

Scott! Are you pleased to see me? Or is that a smoking gun in your pocket?

SCOTT

Uh, that's my inhaler.

STILES

I never knew you used an inhaler.

SCOTT

Yeah, it's a new plot device...

Enter THE FEMALE CO-STARS.

MALIA

Where's Liam? Have

you been training him how to be a werewolf?

STILES

Nah, we chained him to a tree until the rain washes all the product out of his hair so he doesn't have the same haircut as every other male guest star this season. We're beginning to look like a show about clones. Speaking of which...

Enter THEO.

SCOTT

I thought you were Liam.

THEO

It's the hair. Now I'm a werewolf, so can I be in your pack?

SCOTT

I'm suspicious.

THEO

Use your inhaler.

SCOTT [using inhaler]

Ick. Now I feel worse. Yeah sure, Theo.

Episodes go by.

Teens with the same hair as LIAM and THEO are kidnapped, injected with mercury and discarded.

DREAD DOCTOR [to THEO]

Our experiments to give every teenager in Beacon Hills the same haircut are failing. We need to eliminate Scott's geeky hair! How is your plan to turn the pack against each other going?

THEO

Brilliantly. Stiles has accidentally killed someone and gone all sulky. Kira is going bonkers. Scott hasn't worked out his inhaler is killing him. They all hate each other. Bromance is dead.

DREAD DOCTOR

Excellent!

SCOTT works out his inhaler is killing him.

SCOTT

Theo. You traitor.

THEO

Never trust a character introduced from nowhere with such perfect hair.

SCOTT

But now, we fight.

SCOTT defeats THEO and the DREAD DOCTOR.

OUR HEROES

Hurrah!

LYDIA

But what about the supernatural cop who's been disposing of bodies all season. What's he? And why has Kira suddenly been written out? And where's that subplot with Malia's desert wolf mum going?

STILES

Who cares? All the audience wants to see is this...

SCOTT and STILES rip off their shirts and embrace.

Dave Golder



SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest and strangest moments from the month in TV



WANNABE TIME LORD OF THE MONTH

Not only has Halle Berry taken to pulling classic Fourth Doctor poses in *Extant*, she's managed to cross her own timeline too!



IT'S A TRAP OF THE MONTH

For a super-intelligent alien queen, Dawn was pretty dumb not to suspect this OBVIOUS TRAP in *Under the Dome*.



WEIRD SCIENCE OF THE MONTH

Alien technology or some kind of strange art project? You decide on *Defiance*.



UNWANTED MILEY CYRUS OF THE MONTH

Bet the makers of *Teen Wolf* were chuffed to see Miley Cyrus gurning in the corner of the screen during the season finale.



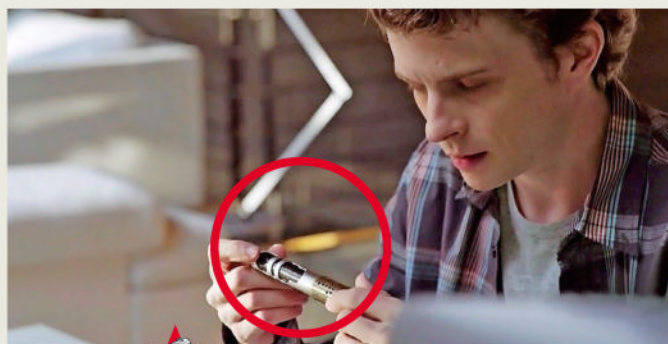
SHAMELESS PUN OF THE MONTH

Doctor Who has a long history of superlative punnage – "hand mines" is up there with the best.



NEW TROPE OF THE MONTH

Zoo is the second show this year to feature group-bonding to 4 Non Blondes' "What's Up?" after *Sense8*. Expect a deluge in 2016.



SONIC SCREWDRIVER OF THE MONTH

Continuum's Alec claims this device is "some sort of quantum processor". Nah, it's a Sonic, mate.



UNEXPECTED CROSSOVER OF THE MONTH

Who knew *The Last Ship* was a *Defiance* prequel?



CROSSING THE STREAMS OF THE MONTH

Fringe's Blair Brown and *Alias*'s Ron Rifkin: parents in *Limitless*!



HAIR FAIL OF THE MONTH

That bow in Anthony Head's hair on *Dominion* is shocking.

ALCHEMY



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R206
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Ring
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BACK TO THE FUTURE

Time travel teasers to celebrate Marty and Doc's trip to the future

Quizmaster: Richard Edwards, Editor

QUESTION 1

Name the estate where Marty lives in 1985. (Construction has just started when he arrives in 1955.)

QUESTION 2 PICTURE QUESTION

Who replaced Crispin Glover as George McFly for the second film?

QUESTION 3

Which toy company manufactures Marty's hoverboard?

QUESTION 4

What's the name of George McFly's debut novel, seen at the end of the first movie?

QUESTION 5

What are the names of Doc and Clara's sons?

QUESTION 6

Who had a "crazy idea of breeding pine trees"?

QUESTION 7 PICTURE QUESTION

What's the name of this actress, who played Marty's girlfriend, Jennifer Parker, in the first movie?

QUESTION 8

In the two 1985s, it's known as Clayton and Eastwood Ravine, respectively. What's it called in 1885?

QUESTION 9

Name Marvin Berry's backing band at the Enchantment Under The Sea dance.

QUESTION 10

Which future resident of Middle-earth pops up in Cafe '80s in the 2015 Hill Valley?



QUESTION 2



QUESTION 7



QUESTION 12



QUESTION 16

QUESTION 11

Who voiced Doc Brown in the *Back To The Future* cartoon?

QUESTION 12 PICTURE QUESTION

Michael J Fox was a regular on which sitcom during shooting on the original movie?

QUESTION 13

What song is playing when Marty first arrives in Hill Valley's town square in 1955?

QUESTION 14

Which Western inspires Marty's makeshift bulletproof vest in his shootout with Mad Dog Tannen?



QUESTION 15

What's the name of the book Marty picks up (and whose contents indirectly cause the hellish alternate 1985) in 2015?

QUESTION 16 PICTURE QUESTION

Match, Skinhead... Who's missing from the trio of Biff's goons?

QUESTION 17

Which rock star appears in Parts II and III as Needles?

QUESTION 18

How many different characters does Michael J Fox play over the course of the trilogy?

QUESTION 19

What's the name of Marty's band who fail in the audition for the school dance in 1985?

QUESTION 20

At what time on Saturday 12 November 1955 does lightning strike Hill Valley's clocktower?

Answers
1 Lyon Estates 2 Jeffrey Weissman 3 Matel 4 Match Made in Space 5 Jules and Verne 6 Old Man Peabody 7 Claudia Wells 8 Shonash 9 The Starlighters 10 Elijah Wood 11 Dan Castellane 12 Family Ties 13 "Mr Sandman" 14 A Fistful Of Dollars 15 Gray's Sports Almanac 1950-2000 16 3D 17 Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) 18 4 (Marty McFly, Martin McFly Jr, Marlene McFly, Seamus McFly) 19 The Pinheads 20 10.04pm

How did you do?

Which of Doc Brown's inventions are you?



→ 0-5
Brain wave analyser



→ 6-10
Automatic dog feeder



→ 11-15
Steam-powered refrigerator



→ 16-19
Steam train time machine



→ 20
DeLorean time machine

Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



THE FUTURE

Richard Edwards, Editor

During the lifespan of this issue of *SFX* we'll finally reach 21 October 2015. We've "known" what this day would look like for over a quarter of a century. In fact, we've long been counting down the days to take possession of our flying cars, to buy tickets for Max Spielberg's holographic blockbuster *Jaws 19*, and to ride around on hoverboards – even those of us who struggle to stay upright more than three metres on a skateboard. Except, even as I write in mid-September, I know that the future Hill Valley we saw in *Back To The Future Part II* will have got most things wrong – and that's why I love it.

When writers imagine the future, they're not really predicting what's going to happen. Sure, they can hire experts to help – watch *Minority Report* now, 13 years after its release, and it's hard to believe Steven Spielberg didn't have a hotline to the future – but really they're doing what best services their story. Prescience is usually just a happy accident.

So while it's cool when *Star Trek* predicts needleless injections, or even when Old Biff Tannen pays for a taxi ride with a fingerprint (Apple Pay 25 years before it became a reality), it's the stuff they got wrong that makes them more interesting. Now, as we get further into the 21st



century that was once the promised land of the future, we get to look sideways at parallel worlds we'd like to have visited – or, in the case of *The Terminator*, be relieved we've avoided them.

It's fun looking at how our lives could have panned out for a few twists of fate – and plausibility. When *Blade Runner* and *Back To The Future II* were made, mass-production flying cars or even a rubbish-powered fusion generator didn't seem all that ridiculous. Obviously, neither idea has come to pass, yet the real world has seen the rise of mass-user computer technology way beyond what we've seen on screen – the anachronistic mish-mash is akin to steampunk.

Frankly the more outlandish or wrong the ideas, the better. I can live without wearing the doubled-up neck ties of *Back To The Future II*, but the fictional world is better for having them. And, despite what Einstein said, I still harbour a hope that sci-fi's predictions of faster-than-light travel will become a reality. According to *Star Trek* mythology Vulcans are due to pass by in less than 50 years. I hope I'm still living long and prospering enough to say hello. ●

Rich is planning a Jaws 1–18 marathon.

FactAttack!

→ The newspaper from tomorrow Doc Brown shows Marty on arriving in the future is dated 22 October – Christopher Lloyd's birthday!

→ Pepsi Max shows up as a brand in Cafe '80s in the 2015 section of *Back To The Future II*. It didn't actually appear in the real world until 1993.

→ Lexus is working on a superconductor-powered hoverboard, and Nike is reportedly developing self-fastening trainers. Hurry up!

→ *Blade Runner* was originally going to be set in 2020, until the makers decided it sounded too much like 20/20 vision and opted for 2019 instead.

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NEXT MONTH!
11 NOV
DETAILS ON
PAGE 31

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